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# Shaping Aryan Race: Affect and Embodiment in the Voelkisch Movement (1900-1935)

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*English abstract: The formation of subjectivity in 19th and 20th century Germany evolved in the context of various discourses and practices of racialization and their transnational genealogies. In the 'Voelkisch movement', the supposed threat of 'racial degeneration' was opposed by a specific education of the individual and collective body, temper, and emotionality. Such education was to yield an affective and corporeal habituation of race. 'Race-appropriate practices' such as rune-gymnastics' primary goal was to cultivate Aryan interiority as a condition for a moral, racial community. Connecting racial nature and culture in a 'holistic education', the Voelkisch aimed to cultivate a White German self. This article traces epistemological assumptions of 'Ariosophy' and analyzes how the practice of rune-gymnastic was experienced to emotionally, practically, and materially produce racial subjectivity. In turn, it shows how the concepts of subjective interiority and affective intentionality were themselves racialized as White.*

## Affective sites of Aryan race – An Introduction

“Antisemitism will emerge and disappear again as a form of cognition, but instead, it will become an organic common sense of the German”<sup>1</sup>, so Hans Blüher, a central figure of the German Youth movement and the Voelkisch movement (Völkische Bewegung), notes in his ‘historical account’ of the anti-Semitic movement in 1922. Indeed, the subsequent German history can hardly be understood without the ‘organic’; the tactile, affective and bodily level of race and racism. Blüher’s statement ties Germanness to antisemitism, and race to racism. He frames their ‘organic’ nature as simultaneously an unconscious common sense and as subject to cultivation. In the early 20th century, a bodily and affective cultivation of racism and antisemitism was widely believed to be central and necessary for the cultivation of race. Race was by no means solely a biological or scientific category, and nor was it perceived as a given or certain entity. Blüher’s quote suggests on the contrary that conceptual knowledge about race was historically contingent and unstable.<sup>2</sup>

1 “Antisemitismus wird einmal als Erkenntnis aufleuchten und dann wieder verschwinden, dafür aber organische Selbstverständlichkeit des deutschen Menschen werden” Blüher, Hans (1922): *Secessio judaica. Philosophische Grundlegung der historischen Sicht des Judentums und der antisemitischen Bewegung*, Berlin, p. 49.

2 Hanke, Christine (2000): *Zwischen Evidenz und Leere. Zur Konstruktion von „Rassen“ im physisch-anthropologischen Diskurs um 1900*, in: Bublitz, Hannelore/ Hanke,

Strategic fixation of race and Germanness – on an individual level as well as a national body (Volkskörper)<sup>3</sup> – was bound to a more stable, corporeal form of antisemitism. The latter had to be materialized.

According to Blüher, antisemitism had become a fundamental relation defining and shaping the very racial body the German: “Antisemitism [...] is clearly in the stage of becoming organic. It is bodily materialized. [...] Antisemitism has become [...] a fundamental operation of the German. Today, you can not consciously decide for or against it, if you are German, you are already determined.”<sup>4</sup> What Blüher refers to as a ‘stage’ of becoming, framing it in terms of necessary evolvment, was in fact subject to careful and conscious scrutiny in the late 19th and early 20th century. To habituate race affectually and bodily was a central aim of the Voelkisch movement, and shared by broader circles engaged in religious and social reform. Cultural cultivation of race tied the Voelkisch to the life-reform movement, the Theosophical and Ariosophical movements<sup>5</sup>, the Pagan movement, the nascent institutionalization of the Buddhist movement and various Protestant revival movements.

Partly emerging from the declining anti-Semitic movement of the 19th century, the Voelkisch<sup>6</sup> movement is widely understood to have combined anti-Semitic, racist and nationalist beliefs in their quest for a religious renewal of the German Volk<sup>7</sup>. A holistic education [ganzheitliche Erziehung] was to counter the supposed threat of racial degeneration, caused by a way of life and socio-economic organization

Christine/ Seier, Andrea: Der Gesellschaftskörper – Zur Neuordnung von Kultur und Geschlecht um 1900, Frankfurt a. M./ New York, pp. 179-235.

3 Bruns, Claudia (2015): Die Grenzen des „Volkskörpers“. Interrelationen zwischen „Rasse“, Raum und Geschlecht in NS-Geopolitik und Kunst. Themenheft, Nationalsozialismus und Geschlecht. Räume - Selbstzeugnisse - Erinnerungen, in: Feministische Studien. Zeitschrift für interdisziplinäre Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung 33.2015, S. 177-196.

4 Original: “[D]er Antisemitismus [...] befindet sich spürbar im Stadium des Organischwerdens. Er verkörpert sich. [...] Der Antisemitismus ist, ohne daß man es schon ganz zugeben will, ein Grundvorgang des deutschen Menschen geworden. Man kann heute nicht mehr mit dem Gehirn für oder wider sein, man ist, wenn man Deutscher ist, bereits abgestempelt, und es gibt kein Entfliehen mehr.” (Blüher: Secessio judaica, p. 49.)

5 Ariosophical belief is further explained in section four of this article.

6 The concept of ‘Volk’ was popularized in Germany during the period of romanticism. It broadly referred to a people with a shared culture living on a common territory not necessarily constituted as a nation. ‘Volk’ frequently indicated a community defined by racial, ethnic and cultural characteristics. Since there is no equivalent concept in the English, I will use ‘Volk’ and ‘Voelkisch movement’ in the course of the article.

7 Puschner, Uwe (1999): Handbuch zur "völkischen Bewegung" 1871-1918, München; Puschner, Uwe (2001): Die völkische Bewegung im wilhelminischen Kaiserreich: Sprache - Rasse - Religion, Darmstadt.

detrimental for the Aryan. While scholars of the Voelkisch movement have frequently analyzed it from a national perspective, emphasizing the continuity of Voelkisch personnel and ideas to National Socialism, the focus on affect and practices utilized to cultivate race reveals quite different entanglements. The linearity from the anti-Semitic movement to the Voelkisch to National Socialism veils a multiplicity of other relations. Not only were 'race-appropriate' practices contested, shared and communicated between actors from diverse political and ideological circles within Germany. Also, their histories lead on a transnational and colonial terrain.

The "pervasive anxiety about white degeneration"<sup>8</sup> and the education of race in sentiment, morality and desire was not new in late 19th century Germany. Both discourses and practices were well rehearsed in European colonies,<sup>9</sup> and had long been constitutive of European bourgeois orderings themselves.<sup>10</sup> Ann Stoler attends us to think about the making of European identity as an unstable category and contested site that was deeply entrenched in colonial discourses of race. Therein, "what sustained racial membership was a middle-class morality, nationalist sentiments, bourgeois sensibilities, normalized sexuality and a carefully circumscribed "milieu""<sup>11</sup>. Racialized distinctions were constitutive of the social hierarchies within European societies, delimiting and naturalizing class and gender positions. They did so, however, not in homogeneous ways, but shaped specific and contradictory attributes of belonging and superiority.

In Germany, as in other parts of Europe, racial identity and social taxonomy were constituted by and constitutive of anti-Semitic trajectories. Thus, colonial discourses of race and German specificities of anti-Semitism were deeply intertwined. If anti-Semitism was a "cultural code" in Imperial Germany<sup>12</sup> - at once a symbolic marker of social and political positions and a way to make sense of the world - it implied and performed a racial identity as well as a racialized interpretative grid of social, political and economic change. Capitalism and communism were both imagined as 'Semitic' socio-economic orders. Therefore, living in

8 Stoler, Ann Laura (1995): *Race and the Education of Desire. Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things*, Durham/ London, p. 102.

9 Pernau, Margrit et. al. (2015): *Civilizing Emotions. Concepts in Nineteenth-Century Asia and Europe*, Oxford.

10 Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, p. 93ff.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 105.

12 Volkov, Shulamit (1978): *Antisemitism as a Cultural Code: Reflections on the History and Historiography of Antisemitism in Imperial Germany*, in: *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 23, 25-46.

industrial and urban conditions was believed to compromise the Aryans' chances in a global contest for survival.

The individual and collective racial body were understood in their characteristics, needs and desires not merely on the level of scientific knowledge and ideology. Rather, Voelkisch and life-reform activists aimed to nurture 'the Aryan' temper, emotions, morality and corporeality. Most of them agreed that religion was key to secure moral guidance and provide a fixed set of ethical predicaments and practices – central to the government of hygiene and health of the racialized social body. Which practices should be considered as 'appropriate', however, was subject to contestation and not at all clear, but depended on competing narratives about Germanic pre-history, archeology and sinology. While some protagonists aimed for a Protestant renewal and a 'Germanization of Christianity'<sup>13</sup>, others believed Christianity to be too strongly rooted in Judaism and therefore strove for an alternative religious life-ethics derived from geographical areas they believed the 'Aryan' had originated from: India, Persia, or Scandinavia.

Drawing on Nordic, Zoroastrian and Buddhist traditions, most believers of a 'race-appropriate religion'<sup>14</sup> and lifestyle critically opposed their concept of the human to the rational, post-enlightenment subject. The Voelkisch intertwined '*Deutsche Kultur*' (German culture) with nature and race and posited it in opposition to the supposedly harmful influences of 'civilization', coded as 'Semitic'. The Voelkisch had a holistic [ganzheitlich] conception of the 'body, spirit, and soul' (or of body, reason, and emotion) and rejected the dualism of mind and body. Their emphasis on the body, however, was to balance its neglect in Western thought.

Bodily health is the foundation and condition for spiritual development. When this principle, which underlies all ancient systems of religion and philosophy, once again becomes the foundation of all education and worldview (Weltanschauung), then true culture would rise tremendously despite 'civilization'.<sup>15</sup>

13 Bonus, Arthur (1911): Zur Germanisierung des Christentums, Jena.

14 Schnurbein, Stefanie von (1999): Die Suche nach einer „artgerechten“ Religion in ‚germanisch‘ und ‚deutschgläubigen‘ Gruppen, in: Puschner, Handbuch zur "völkischen Bewegung", pp. 172-185; Schnurbein, Stefanie von/ Ulbricht, Justus H. (Hg.) (2001): Völkische Religion und Krisen der Moderne. Entwürfe "arteigener" Glaubenssysteme seit der Jahrhundertwende, Würzburg.

15 My translation. Original: "Die Gesundheit des Körpers ist die Grundlage und die Vorbedingung für die geistige Entwicklung. Wenn dieser Grundsatz, welcher allen alten Religionen und Philosophiesystemen zugrunde gelegen hat, wieder die Grundlage aller Erziehung und aller Weltanschauung werden könnte, dann würde die wahre Kultur trotz der 'Zivilisation' einen ungeheuren Aufschwung nehmen." (Oberdörffer,

Thus, in the Voelkisch causality, German culture originated in the body and practice rather than in the realm of ideas. And the German was considered a man of action (Mann der Tat). Conversely, in rather Lamarckian fashion, the material body itself was believed to take shape through cultural practice and environment. Practices such as vegetarianism<sup>16</sup>, nudism<sup>17</sup>, sports<sup>18</sup>, dance<sup>19</sup>, and 'rune-gymnastics'<sup>20</sup> were "emotional practices"<sup>21</sup> utilized to *culturally* produce racial *nature* in its emotionality, corporeality, and spirituality. Therein, the intentional education of affect was key. However, I will argue that a core element of the Voelkisch emotion-work was not a conscious regulation of prior existing emotions, but rather the very production of feeling and affective relations, which constituted the individual and collective body. Furthermore, they contributed to a concept of subjectivity referring to white Europeans and tied the very capacity of affect-regulation to whiteness. The affective and physical training that constituted the sites of subjectivation, implied emotional authenticity as well as conscious self-restraint and transformation. And these traits were ascribed to the

Dr. med, H. J. (1916): Lebensveredelung, in: Hunkel, Neues Leben. Monatsschrift für deutsche Wiedergeburt, 1. Heft.)

- 16 For more detailed accounts on German vegetarianism see: Baumgartner, Judith (1998): Vegetarismus, in: Kerbs, Diethart/ Reulecke, Jürgen (1998) (Hg.): Handbuch der deutschen Reformbewegungen 1880-1933, Wuppertal, p. 127-140; Linse, Ulrich (1998): Das „natürliche“ Leben. Die Lebensreform. In: Dülmen, Richard van (Hg.), Erfindung des Menschen. Schöpfungsträume und Körperbilder, 1500-2000, Wien, p. 435-456.
- 17 For a detailed study of the German nudist movement and its intersections with gender and race see: Möhring, Maren (2004): Marmorleiber. Körperbildung in der deutschen Nacktkultur, Köln, Weimar, Wien.
- 18 For a detailed account on sports and its connections to nudism and dance see: Wedemeyer-Kolwe, Bernd (2004): Der neue Mensch. Körperkultur im Kaiserreich und in der Weimarer Republik, Würzburg; Goltermann, Svenja (1998): Körper der Nation. Habitusformierung und die Politik des Turnens 1860-1890, Göttingen.
- 19 For dance and rhythm in the German Kaiserreich see: Nitschke, August (1990): Der Kult der Bewegung. Turnen, Rhythmik und neue Tänze, in: Nitschke, August/ Ritter, Gerhard A./ Peukert, Detlev J.K./ Bruch, Rüdiger vom (1990) (Hg.): Jahrhundertwende. Der Aufbruch in die Moderne, 1880-1930, Bd. 1, Reinbek bei Hamburg, pp. 258-285:
- 20 The design and protagonists of rune-gymnastics have been discussed in Wedemeyer-Kolwe, Bernd (2009): Runengymnastik. Von völkischer Körperkultur zu alternativen Selbsterfahrungspraktik, in: Puschner, Uwe/ Großmann, G. Ulrich (Hg.), Völkisch und national. Zur Aktualität alter Denkmuster im 21. Jahrhundert. Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft: Darmstadt, pp. 329–340; Gruender, René (2012): Runengymnastik. Die soziale Konstruktion eines esoterischen Körper-Kultes, in: Gugutzer, Robert/ Boettcher, Moritz (2012) (Hg.): Körper, Sport und Religion. Zur Soziologie religiöser Verkörperung, Wiesbaden, pp. 341-356.
- 21 Scheer, Monique (2011): Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (And is That What Makes Them Have a History)?, in: History and Theory 51.2, pp. 193–220.

European bourgeois subject and constituted within racial distinctions. While anti-Semitic stereotypes regarded Jewish people as incapable of displaying emotional authenticity, colonial racism framed Black people as unable to control their instincts and desires. In the Voelkisch discourse, only the Aryan German was fully capable of 'affective intentionality'<sup>22</sup>. And attaining full subjecthood meant to mediate rational and corporeal capacities by means of affect. In reverse, by engaging in those practices, the practitioner claimed to be their legitimate addressee, to be that self-conscious subject capable to steer his or her emotions. He or she framed, performed and reproduced herself as a White, Aryan German.

Although the work on affect and emotion was most central to the Voelkisch internalization of race, it cannot be fully grasped by the notion of 'affect-control'. Most prominently, Norbert Elias (1897-1990) presented 'affect-control' in his work *The Civilizing Process* as an increasing mastery of emotions by rational capacities<sup>23</sup>. Therein, Elias drew our attention to the historicity of feeling and offered a critique of the idea of immediacy and interiority of emotion.<sup>24</sup> He did not, however, historicize or question the notions of rationalization as a European, post-enlightenment teleology or the very historical split of concepts of 'rationality', 'emotions' and the 'body'. Elias incorporated affects and habitus in a Weberian frame of rationalization. Within the civilizing process, affect-control is inherently rational, retaining the latter's primacy over the emotional and corporeal as well as the very distinction of rationality, emotions, and the body. The historicity of the implicit idea of 'the subject' and 'the rational' is not reflected upon; yet it is this very historicity that needs to be addressed if we want to understand the specific emergence of a racialized subjectivity and common sense in early twentieth century Germany. In contrast to the rationalization paradigm, which posits a procedural civilizing and mastery of nature (emotions, drives, and the body) by culture (consciousness) in a post-enlightenment framework, the racialized subjectivation in Voelkisch practices is neither irrational nor conforms to a post-enlightenment rationalization. It needs instead to be read in its own production and

22 Whitney, Shiloh: Fanon on the Racialized Amputation of Affective Intentionality, Presentation at the Carribean Philosophical Association, June 22-24 2017, article forthcoming.

23 "It is already quite clear how human beings are becoming more complex, and internally split in a quite specific way. Each man, as it were, confronts himself. He 'conceals his passions,' 'disavows his heart,' 'acts against his feelings.'" Elias, Norbert (2010): *The Civilizing Process. Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, Malden, MA, p. 403.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 402.

systematization, blurring the conceptual boundaries of rationality, emotions, and the body, which were bound to race as a 'determinant in the last instance'. How, then, were the immediate ('natural') reactions and perceptions racialized on the one hand, and culturally formed and educated on the other? How were culture, nature, and race interlinked in the Voelkisch imagination and how was the practical and affective education designed that targeted them?

## Culture, Race and Whiteness in Voelkisch Discourse

The concept of 'culture' in Voelkisch discourse was intrinsically bound to a very modern concept of (Aryan) race whereas the concept of 'civilization' was tied to a specific 'Volk' or people. Each 'developed' people was thought to have its own specific organization of communal life, which the Voelkisch understood as 'civilization'. But only a few civilizations 'deserved' to be called 'cultures'. In fact, the Voelkisch argued, 'culture' was an aspirational condition towards an ideal,<sup>25</sup> so that any civilization could be assigned a value on a linear scale of development towards 'true culture'. Furthermore, 'culture' could not be generated at will but was necessarily bound to race.<sup>26</sup> According to the Voelkisch, all culture originated from Aryan influence, so the highest culture was necessarily Aryan. As the German anthropologist, zoologist, and philosopher Ludwig Woltmann, whose journal *Politisch-Anthropologische Revue* (Political-Anthropological Review) was a central reference for many protagonists of the Voelkisch movement, explained: "As a natural scientist, the anthropologist first and foremost has to concern himself with races, their corporal and spiritual properties [...]. The most important one for us, which is involved in a singular manner in the formation of cultural people at the forefront of humanity is the Nordic or Aryan."<sup>27</sup> Whereas people of African descent were denied the

25 "Kultur ist ein Strebezustand, dem Ideal entgegen." (Mueller, Von Dr. L. H. (1902): Rasse und Kultur, In: Der Hammer Nr. 3, Januar 1903, Leipzig, p. 54).

26 "Kultur ist nicht nach Belieben zu erzeugen und auf beliebige Individuen zu übertragen; sie ist an die Rasse gebunden. Alle Kultur setzt bestimmte Rassenmischung voraus." (ibid., p. 53).

27 My translation. Original: "Als Naturforscher hat sich der Anthropologe zunächst nur mit Rassen zu beschäftigen, deren Eigenschaften, leibliche wie geistige [...]. Die für uns wichtigste und in hervorragender Weise an der Zusammensetzung der an der Spitze der Menschheit stehenden Kulturvölker beteiligte Rasse ist die nordische oder arische." (Woltmann, Ludwig/ Buhmann, Hans (1902): Naturwissenschaft und Politik. Zur Einführung, in: Politisch-anthropologische Revue. Monatsschrift für das soziale und geistige Leben der Völker, Nr. 1, p. 55).



ability of cultural development, those aspects of Chinese civilization, which were valued as ‘culture’ were attributed to the ‘proven Aryan influences’<sup>28</sup> originating from centuries of ‘racial mixing’. Thus, Voelkisch thought indivisibly linked nature, race, and culture, and regarded ‘Aryan degeneration’ not only as a threat to their own community but, since culture was thought to be carried by blood, to human culture in general. Securing cultural development meant to vivify the Aryan race, which was thought to be preserved most profoundly by Germans and North-Western Europeans.

In the search for racial renewal, eugenics was regarded as only one principle, which was part of a holistic [ganzheitlich] life-ethics. As culture, temper, hexis, and habitus were thought to be dependent on breeding, so did ‘blood’ depend on soil, culture, religion, and mores. In a “Lamarckian feature of eugenic thinking”<sup>29</sup>, race could be modified and indeed produced through environment, but also needed strict self-government in matters of hygiene and morality.<sup>30</sup> As David Theo Goldberg points out, race and specifically whiteness was re-fashioned from the end of the 19th century, increasingly stressing sociological, cultural and psychological features as well as the influence of environment and diet rather than bodily features attained by measurement.<sup>31</sup> In a 1903 issue of *Hammer* Theodor Fritsch (1852-1933), an early representative of the Voelkisch movement, previously an advocate of the anti-Semitic movement, and the issuer of many Voelkisch publications such as the monthly journal *Hammer*, describes morality as a ‘breeding principle’: “Morality is the recipe for the health-preservation of the species; morality is the teaching of racial health. Anything that infects the species is immoral.”<sup>32</sup> Thereby individual morality was regarded as a precondition for racial health. Training

28 Mueller, *Rasse und Kultur*, p. 54.

29 Stoler, Ann Laura (2010): *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power. Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*, Berkeley/ Los Angeles, p. 64.

30 As Ann Stoler has shown for colonial Java, “self-discipline, sexual morality, and self-control were visual signs” that ties middle-class identity and rearing to an “essence of being European” – and thus, class distinctions to racial taxonomies in the colony as well as within Europe (ibid., p. 154).

31 Goldberg, David Theo (2002): *The Racial State*, Malden, MA/ Oxford, p. 174.

32 My translation. Original: “Sittlichkeit ist das Rezept der Gesund-Erhaltung der Art; Sittlichkeit ist rassistische Gesundheits-Lehre. Unsittlich ist alles was die Art verdirbt.” (Fritsch, Theodor [Thor, Fritz] (1903): *Eigenwohl und Gemeinwohl*, in: *Der Hammer* Nr. 16, Februar 1903, Leipzig, p. 491).

instincts, drives and emotions tied cultural and personal life to eugenic means.<sup>33</sup>



Figure 1: Advert of Deutscher Orden für Regeneration, Hammer 1903.

German physical Anthropology around 1900 rather sought the classification of races increasingly impossible. Every new differentiation further destabilized existing racial categories, re-producing race through the very unfulfilled desire for evidence.<sup>34</sup> Thus, race was constitutively unstable, and had to be constantly reproduced and performed exactly due to the lack of clarity and evidence – rendering the private and intimate political indeed.<sup>35</sup>

And most Voelkisch shared the believe that, due to hundreds of years of ‘mixing’, pure races could not be distinguished. For some, the ‘Aryan’ was already a ‘mixed’ form. On a continuum between ‘Mongolean-N.’ and ‘White’, the ‘Aryan’ was quite close to, but not fully White.<sup>36</sup> Others insisted that, although the concept of Aryan was indeed white and pure, it had always been an ideal. Like culture, pure race was an ideal concept [*Annäherungs-Begriff*]<sup>37</sup> not existing in the modern world. Thus, the threat of contamination was written into the very concept of Aryanism.

Practices of ‘racial cleansing’ were thus not implemented to restore an ancient purity, but rather to fix and materially produce the racial or Aryan body and self in the present and for the future. Such ‘race-appropriate practices’ included adopting a vegetarian diet, sports, gymnastics, abstinence from alcohol and tobacco, and other forms of self-work. Therein, the Voelkisch explicitly oriented themselves towards

33 Fritsch, Theodor (1904): Zur Klärung des Rassen-Begriffs. Brief an einen Anders-Meinenden, in: Der Hammer Nr. 54, September 1904, Leipzig; Fritsch, Theodor (1904): Rasse oder Erziehung?, in: Der Hammer Nr. 53, September 1904, Leipzig.

34 Hanke, Evidenz und Leere, p. 190.

35 Stoler, Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power, p. 7.

36 Augustin, Wilhelm (1912): Die Arier und der Krieg, Hattingen-Ruhr, p. 6.

37 Mueller, Rasse und Kultur, p. 53.

a 'new human' [*der neue Mensch*]<sup>38</sup> which was a future to be attained rather than an originary state awaiting recovery.

In a 1927 issue of *Nordische Kultur-Arbeit. Bebilderte Monatsschrift für Germanische Gesittung, Bildung und Religion* (Nordic Culture-Work. The illustrated Monthly Journal for Germanic Temper, Education and Religion), Walter Mittenzwei wrote:

It is impossible to speak of either a Germanic or a German race today. Neither can one bridge the huge gap into grey antiquity and identify the contemporary bright race with the primal word 'Aryan.' So the race-question cannot be asserted backwards; it is, rather, a path into the future. It is a goal. This aim demands consciousness just as the approaching times demand determined commitment and action.<sup>39</sup>

The Voelkisch image of Aryanism was not anti-modern and backward oriented, as has often been posed by secondary literature.<sup>40</sup> Rather, the narratives of origin were utilized to draft a path of intentional racialization with consciously modern means.

Whiteness, then, is not yet as such the unnamed norm. To the Voelkisch, describing the White, Nordic Aryan, its racialization, and fixation were, on the contrary, considered matters of life and death. 'White', 'Aryan,' and 'German' were contested concepts and sites of struggle over definition. Here, whiteness does not only gain "currency by being unnoticed"<sup>41</sup>, constructed as "invisibility and universality"<sup>42</sup>.

38 Hentschel, Willibald (1906): Rassen-Ökonomie, in: Der Hammer Nr. 91, Leipzig, p. 195f.

39 My translation. Original: "Man kann heute ebensowenig von einer germanischen wie von einer deutschen Rasse sprechen. Man kann aber auch nicht die riesenhafte Brücke ins graue Altertum schlagen und die gegenwärtig helle Rasse mit dem Urwort 'Arisch' bezeichnen. Die Rassenfrage kann sich also nicht nach rückwärts behaupten, sondern sie ist ein Weg in die Zukunft. Sie ist ein Ziel. Dieses Ziel fordert Bewußtsein, die kommende Zeit entschiedenes Bekenntnis und die Tat." (Mittenzwei, Walter (1927): Das Buch als Wegweiser in die deutsche Vorgeschichte, Kunst, Religion, Sage und Märchen, in: Hefke, Ernst A. (Hg.): Monatsschrift Nordische Kultur-Arbeit. Bebilderte Monatsschrift für germanische Gesittung, Bildung und Religion, Rostock, p. 1).

40 Mosse, George L. (1964): *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich*. New York; Stern, Fritz. (1961): *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology*. Berkeley. A critique of the anti-modern paradigm in regard to life-reform (and Voelkisch) movements is presented by Sharma, Avi (2012): *Wilhelmine Nature: Natural Lifestyle and Practical Politics in the German Life-Reform Movement (1890-1914)*, in: *Social History*, 37(2012) 1, pp. 36-54.

41 Ahmed, Sara (2007): *A Phenomenology of Whiteness*, in: *Feminist Theory* 8.2 2007, pp. 149–168, here p. 149.

42 Alcoff, Linda M. (2006): *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self*, Oxford and New York, p. 205.

Rather, it undergoes a historical process of production, conceptual fixation, and emotionally-corporeal education. Whiteness “here is a state of being, desirable habits and customs, projected patterns of thinking and living, governance and self-governance”.<sup>43</sup> And these features had to be constantly re-inscribed and reiterated of the level of everyday practices and education to be interiorized by the subject.<sup>44</sup>

## German Education and Racial Economy

“Since the racial being is in the last instance a crop of its education”<sup>45</sup> Theodor Fritsch states in his 1904 essay *Rasse oder Erziehung?* (Race or Education?), “I admit, first and foremost it comes down to education.”

When Willibald Hentschel (1858-1947), an early and radical Voelkisch proponent of racial renewal, explained his idea of a ‘sensible racial economy’<sup>46</sup> to give rise to the Aryan kind, he did not mean ‘economy’ in the narrow sense. Rather, he understood economic organization as part of a cultural form, which was to produce the racial self and guide the way to an age of the ‘new human’.<sup>47</sup> Urbanization, negative demographic development and wrong habits were to be countered by a sensible ‘household’ of racial life and reproduction, including life-reform, rural settlement and ideological and habitual education. Such a racial economy was to restore the inner life of the individual, which could then become the foundation of collective people and race. Against the common assumption that Voelkisch and fascist ideology neglected the individual in favor of the collective or community,<sup>48</sup> many Voelkisch protagonists clearly stated that racial renewal had to begin with subjective interiority: “Rather, it will be necessary to start internally, to build up a world of thought and will, which is appropriate to the deepest human nature and clearly reveals its salutary purpose.”<sup>49</sup> Theodor Fritsch pointed out that it is necessary to

43 Goldberg, *The Racial State*, p. 171.

44 *Ibid.*, pp. 106ff.

45 My translation. Original: “Denn das Rasse-Wesen ist in letzter Linie auch eine Frucht der Erziehung.” “Also gut! Zugegeben, auf die Erziehung kommt es vor Allem an.” (Fritsch, *Rasse oder Erziehung?*, pp. 391f.)

46 Hentschel, *Rassen-Ökonomie*, p. 195.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 196.

48 Puschner, Uwe (2010): *Gemeinschaft – Annäherungen an einen Schlüsselbegriff im völkischen und völkisch-religiösen Denken*, in: Scherzberg, Lucia (Hg.): *Gemeinschaftskonzepte im 20. Jahrhundert zwischen Wissenschaft und Ideologie*, Münster, pp. 97-114.

49 My translation. Original: “Es wird vielmehr nötig, im Inneren zu beginnen, eine Gedanken- und Willens-Welt aufzubauen, die der tiefsten Menschlichen Natur

start with the subject as the foundation of ‘German essence’<sup>50</sup>, its life-ethics, and life-practical re-orientation. The constitution of a racial self and interiority was a goal in its own right. It did not eventually dissolve in the racial community but was to be preserved in its individuality.<sup>51</sup> Since ‘blood’ and the emotional, virtuous, and ethical life of the individual were intrinsically linked, a holistic education targeted the subjective conceptions of life, happiness, virtue, honor<sup>52</sup>, of morality and religious feeling.<sup>53</sup> The collective, moral economy of race-preserving principles of hygiene, reproduction, and life-style had to be constantly re-inscribed in predicaments of sentiment<sup>54</sup>, desire and personal feeling of right or wrong – because it was feared not to be upheld in practice. Hentschel’s racial economy pictures modernity as a double-edged sword: Yielding the knowledge about race and the means for its intentional production on the one hand, racially coded threats of Jewish capital, Black and Asian infiltration, Slavic mimicry and proletarianization of the German lower strata on the other.<sup>55</sup> Thus, ‘colonial anxieties’, imaginaries<sup>56</sup> and fears of contamination that Ann Stoler retraces from the Dutch Indies into the making of European bourgeois identity,<sup>57</sup> are firmly in place in German sites of subject formation.

Racial identity was, however, not always center stage, but entrenched in projects of social reform and politics of emancipation: A ‘practical education’ [praktische Erziehung]<sup>58</sup> replaced what the Voelkisch considered the harmful influences of their contemporary educational practices. The emphasis on rational capacities and the memorization of knowledge in post-enlightenment education was seen not only as worthless but harmful in a degenerative sense<sup>59</sup>. In positing an

gerecht wird und klar ihre heilsamen Ziele erkennen läßt.” (Fritsch, *Eigenwohl und Gemeinwohl*, pp. 307f).

50 Fritsch, *Zur Klärung des Rassen-Begriffs*, p. 394.

51 Dieter, Reimar: *Germanische Charakterzüge*, in: *Neudeutsche Zeitung* Nr. 76, 1. November 1934, p.1.

52 *Ibid.*, p. 418.

53 *Ibid.*, p. 420.

54 Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*.

55 Hentschel, *Rassen-Ökonomie*, pp. 192ff.

56 Stoler, Ann Laura (2009): *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*, Princeton, pp. 19ff.

57 Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*; Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*.

58 *Ibid.*, p. 392.

59 Fritsch, *Zur Klärung des Rassen-Begriffs*, p. 419.

opposition between ‘mind’ [Verstand] and ‘reason’ [Vernunft],<sup>60</sup> many protagonists strove for a broader notion of ‘reason,’ simultaneously understood as ‘spirit’ [Geist]. While school education ‘pretended’ to develop the pupil’s mind, spirit, or even temper and character with various kinds of knowledge,<sup>61</sup> it utilized the wrong kind of memory. Fritsch instead proposed a “space for free comprehension, sensation, for feeling and thinking, for observation and will.”<sup>62</sup> Against the teaching of ‘dead knowledge’ and rote learning Fritsch recommended a ‘living memory’ to retain previous experience<sup>63</sup>, an education of the senses, of ‘taste, scent, feeling’<sup>64</sup>, and ‘hearing’. Developing the senses through sound, music, color perception, and bodily experience could educate certain emotions ‘appropriate’ to the racial body: “A specific color or musical sound can excite, calm, weaken, vivify a person, can make him joyful or sad.”<sup>65</sup> Thus, Voelkisch educational reform was placed in the broader context of sensual education contemporary philosophy and psychology.<sup>66</sup>

In 1903, Georg Meurer wrote in his essay on German education:

The one-sided intellectual education that we receive in our schools perpetuates a bleak degeneration of the instincts. Asking for knowledge of the mind, [...] the neglect of everything ethical, of everything emotional contributed to us displaying such ape-like respect for everything ‘civilized’ in the higher schools, thereby harming everything native and simple. The mind is surely a great gift from God, but

60 Wahrmund, Prof. Dr. Ad. (1902): Vernunft und Verstand, in: Der Hammer Nr. 3, März 1902, Leipzig, pp. 66-68.

61 Fritsch, Theodor (1911): Verstand - Instinkt - Vernunft - Genie, in: Der Hammer Nr. 217, Leipzig, p. 337.

62 My translation. Original: “[...] Raum für freies Erfassen und Ersinnen, für Empfinden und Denken, für Beobachten und Wollen.” (ibid, p. 338).

63 “Das lebendige Gedächtnis soll uns das Ergebnis früherer Erfahrung aufbewahren.” (ibid., p. 339).

64 Ibid.

65 My translation. Original: “So kann z.B. ein bestimmter Farb- oder Musikton den Menschen erregen, beruhigen, schwächen, beleben, freudig oder traurig stimmen.” (Fritsch, Theodor (1903): Natur und Mensch, in: Der Hammer Nr. 14, Januar 1903, Leipzig, pp. 105f.).

66 In his theory of psychological types, Carl Gustav Jung makes use of the Delsartist typology of spirit, body and soul and his pedagogics of performativity of character and emotions. According to Jung, each individual conscience is connected to a collective subconscious. Since the human is not only a rational, but a sensual, emotional and instinctive being, the subconscious could be activated through sensual perception with sand movement. Following Delsarte, he associated certain colors with aspects of personality structure and their reactions in the bodily, emotional and spiritual nature (Jung, Carl Gustav (1921): *Psychologische Typen*, Zürich).

how limited is its force if it is detached from its ground: the spirit, drives and instincts.<sup>67</sup>

Turning away from overly ‘civilized’ education was thus a move toward the rearing of specifically German “affective memories”<sup>68</sup> and sensual registers, as necessary modes of racial distinctions between the German and ‘Ungerman’. Negative drives should not be repressed but canalized as immediate reactions towards the ‘Other’, thereby creating it’s the very distance, borders, and emotional relation to the ‘German’.<sup>69</sup> Thus, the education of the senses and aesthetic perception was to cultivate Germanness and its emotional repulsion against anything ‘Ungerman’. Such sentimental education was closely tied to the German understanding of culture. Ten years previously, August Julius Langbehn had anonymously (‘by a German’) published his highly influential and frequently cited text, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*<sup>70</sup> (Rembrandt as an Educator). The essay had been printed in 39 editions during the Wilhelmine Empire and had gradually radicalized with each edition, not least influenced by a vivid correspondence between Langbehn and Theodor Fritsch. *Rembrandt als Erzieher* – at once an interpretation of Nietzsche, a pedagogical treatise and a political manifesto – viewed art and sensual perception as the means for a Voelkisch-German rebirth. In this vein, Fritsch wrote in his essay *Was ist Erziehung?* (What is Education?) that “far more precious than formal education is aesthetic education. Education in general is an essentially aesthetic issue”<sup>71</sup>.

Aesthetic, holistic education was not only elucidated in publications but also implemented within the movement for an alternative ‘Volkshochschule’ (community college) as well as, albeit in a different

67 My translation. Original: “Die durchaus einseitige intellektuelle Ausbildung, die wir in unseren Schulen empfangen, führt eine trostlose Verkümmern der Instinkte mit sich. Das Fragen nach dem Verstandes-Wissen, [...] die Nicht-Beachtung alles Ethischen, alles Gefühls-Mäßigen haben ihr gut Teil dazu beigetragen, daß wir zum Schaden alles Urwüchsigen, Einfachen einen so affenmäßigen Respekt vor dem auf höheren Schulen ‘Gebildeten’ zur Schau tragen. Verstand ist ja eine gute Gabe Gottes, aber wie beschränkt ist seine Wirkungskraft, wenn man ihn loslöst von seinem Nährboden: der Vernunft, den Trieben der Instinkte.” (Meurer, Georg (1903): Ueber deutsche Erziehung Teil 4, in: Der Hammer Nr. 36, Leipzig.)

68 Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*, p. 198.

69 Ibid.

70 Langbehn, August Julius (1890): *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, Leipzig.

71 My translation. Original: “Wertvoller als die formale Bildung ist die aesthetische Bildung. Bildung ist ueberhaupt etwas wesentlich aesthetisches, denn die Frage der harmonischen Abrundung ist eine aesthetische Frage. [...] Aesthetische Menschen sind harmonische Menschen und harmonische Menschen sind gebildete Menschen.” (Fritsch, Theodor (1908): *Was ist Erziehung?*, in: Der Hammer Nr. 138, März 1908, Leipzig, p. 167).

form, in Rudolf Steiner's later project of 'Waldorfschule' and in agrarian schools. Bruno Tanzmann (1878-1939), a second-generation proponent of the Voelkisch movement, was strongly involved in the early discussions concerning the German *Volkshochschule* — which, in a modified form, still presents an alternative to the contemporary universities in Germany today. In the introduction to his *Deutsche Bauern-Hochschule* (German Peasant Academy), which was a followup journal on *Denkschrift zur Begründung einer Deutschen Volkshochschule* (Memoir on the Foundation of a German Volkshochschule), Tanzmann states that both publications were based on the idea of race.<sup>72</sup>

Tanzmann, like Fritsch and Hentschel, was also a primary proponent of the Voelkisch settlement movement<sup>73</sup>. According to Fritsch's early, unrealized project of a 'future town' (*Die Stadt der Zukunft*) the settlements were supposed to be 'production-sites of German life'<sup>74</sup> for "free development of Germanic essence in spirit, morality and taste," "in summa: German life-ethic and artistic life-compositions — a German culture"<sup>75</sup>. Some of these settlements, like Willibald Hentschel's utopian vision of 'Mittgart' were intended as breeding institutions, combining a holistic education with eugenic means. Mittgart was to "proceed from a theoretical upholding of the Germanic race to the planned cultivation"<sup>76</sup> of a 'new human' and a new Voelkisch elite. Drawing on marriage and mating in old Germanic cultures, Hentschel proclaimed temporal marriages till pregnancy between the roughly thousand women and hundred men of each settlement, choosing the best specimen, creating 300 further settlements and rotating the men to avoid incest.<sup>77</sup> Besides mating, also intimacy, diet, sports and social activities were to be regulated and follow strict rules to reinstall a healthy race. The offspring

72 "Schon damals war bei mir der Rassegedanke der Grundafford [...]" (Tanzmann, Bruno (1926): *Aus meinem Leben als völkischer Vorkämpfer*, in: *Deutsche Bauern-Hochschule. Vierteljahreszeitschrift für deutsche Bauernkultur und den germanischen Volkshochschulgedanken*, 6. Jahrgang, 1. Folge, Hellerau-Dresden, p. 2).

73 Linse, Ulrich (1999): *Völkisch-rassische Siedlungen der Lebensreform*, In: Puschner, Handbuch zur "völkischen Bewegung", pp. 397-410.

74 My translation. Original: "Pflanzschule deutschen Lebens" (Fritsch, Theodor (1896): *Die Stadt der Zukunft*. Mit zwei farbigen Tafeln und 14 Text-Abbildungen, Leipzig, p. 7).

75 My translation. Original: "eine freie Entfaltung deutschen Wesens in Geist, Sitte und Geschmack," "in Summa: deutsche Lebenskunst und kunstgestaltetes Leben — eine deutsche Kultur" (ibid.).

76 My translation. Original: "Er will von der theoretischen Hochhaltung germanischer Art zu deren planmäßiger Pflege fortschreiten." (Hentschel, Willibald (1904): *Mittgart. Ein Weg zur Erneuerung der Germanischen Rasse*. Buchholz-Friedewald, p. 607).

77 Ibid.



of the settlements was then to be sent to the towns to renew their ‘racial energy’. Although the Mittgart settlement was never realized, it was widely (and critically) discussed in Voelkisch circles and drawn on in realized projects in years to come. The *Mittgart-Bund* (Mittgart league) published the periodical *Mittgart-Blätter*, worked with people in existing settlements, institutionalized as a cooperative in 1912 and searched for places for settlement in Argentina and Canada. The settlement *Niegard* implemented elements of Mittgart in 1922 and from 1924 various settlements were installed by the *Artamanen* - a radical Voelkisch league within the German youth movement, which was officially founded in 1926, integrated into the *Hitlerjugend* under National Socialism and officially only resolved in 2001. The current revival of Voelkisch settlements,<sup>78</sup> but also organic life-reform settlements far beyond Germany, are frequently referring to the Hentschel and the Artamans in their own narratives. Some were indeed the sites of education through race-appropriate practices and religion, although the practices were implemented far beyond the moral economy of the settlement.

## Remembering through the ‘Corporeal Eye’: Runes and Ariosophy

Religion was utilized to consolidate morality into an ethical and lawful system. Thus, in the Voelkisch discourse, religion and race become intersecting modes of sociality, each taking up in “its own terms of articulation the technologies and expressions”<sup>79</sup> of the other. In this sense, the quest for a race-appropriate religiosity was seen as necessary to install a moral education, as well as creation and preservation of the race.

Guido von List (1848-1919), next to Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels the founder of Austrian Ariosophy and an early proponent of the Voelkisch movement, advocated a holistic concept of life and man in his early twentieth century writing. His work influenced wide circles of the Voelkisch and esoteric movement and beyond, especially through the publications of the Guido-von-List-Gesellschaft (Guido von List Society)

78 Amadeu Antonio Stiftung/Schmidt, Anna (2014): *Völkische Siedler/innen im ländlichen Raum. Basiswissen und Handlungsstrategien*, Berlin.

79 Goldberg, David Theo (2016): *Militarizing Race*, in: *Social Text* 129, Vol. 34, No. 4, p. 20.

founded in Vienna in 1908.<sup>80</sup> List's religious philosophy aimed to dissolve several dualisms and assumed a simultaneity and unity of body and spirit, of individual and the universe, and of past and future.<sup>81</sup> Striving for a life-affirming historiography in the Nietzschean sense<sup>82</sup>, he constructed a historical narrative and belief system to serve the present and future of the Aryan race.

List's Ariosophy – a combination of Buddhist, Theosophical, Protestant, and Pagan elements – adopted a pantheist view in which the individual self<sup>83</sup> was part of, and incorporated in, God and the universe. Each entity was simultaneously force and substance, each human individual a “beideinig-zwiespältige Zweiheit”<sup>84</sup> (bi-unital divisive duality) of body and spirit. Adapting Buddhist and Hindu ideas, List introduced a system of reincarnation<sup>85</sup>. In death, each person was momentarily divided into a material and spiritual being, both remaining an eternally preserved unity in the cosmos. In a re-interpretation of Buddhism with a deliberate emphasis on the bodily-corporeal elements, body and spirit were believed to reunite in each rebirth, carrying the spiritual and bodily knowledge of all previous generations. Each being, according to List, represented a cycle in itself. The individual cycles united into the next cycle of the “racial or folk spirit”<sup>86</sup>, which were subordinated to the ‘spirit of the earth’. The next levels were the ‘sun-spirit or sun-god’ and then the ‘world-spirit’, the great nameless god, who was present in the smallest things and atoms. This pantheist ideal paves the way for List's concept of ‘Erberinnerung’, an inherited racial memory of the Aryan which connects each self to the ancestry of “Armanentum,” the high leaders of ancient Germanic tribes. Following this line of thought, many Voelkisch believed the Aryan to be the son of the sun-god and its earthly incarnation. The feeling of interiority was for the Aryan at the same time the feeling of his race and of his own divinity. According to List, the psychic force of the Armanians was naturally and

80 Goodrick-Clarke, Nicholas (2004): *Die okkulten Wurzeln des Nationalsozialismus*, Wiesbaden, pp. 43f.

81 List, Guido von (1908): *Die Armanenschaft der Ario-Germanen*, Wien, p. 14.

82 Nietzsche, Friedrich (1984): *Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben*, Zürich, pp. 61ff.

83 “Ich” (List, *Die Armanenschaft der Ario-Germanen*, pp. 8f.) or “Ichheit oder Individualität” (List, Guido von (1908): *Das Geheimnis der Runen*. Mit einer Runentafel, Guido-List-Bücherei, Reihe 1, Band 1, Groß-Lichterfelde, p. 11).

84 List, *Die Armanenschaft der Ario-Germanen*, p. 11.

85 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

86 My translation. Original: “den Rassen- oder Volksgeist” (*ibid.*, p. 14).

necessarily kept in each Aryan individuals' [Ichheit] subconscious and was preserved in its intuitive sensation<sup>87</sup>.

The secret, holy knowledge of Aryan spirit was, according to Ariosophy, given a 'rita', a religious system of rules of life, and formalized in rune-letters and symbols. The discussion on the rune alphabet had been prevalent well beyond Voelkisch circles in academic discussions of German pre-history since the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>88</sup> For List and his followers, however, runes were more than just ancient letters. Rather, they functioned as secret codes or 'media' for affective and corporeal knowledge. Through figurative and corporeal signs, perceived through feeling, the truth of Armanism was taught to the 'common people'. "The people, who were in the broader masses never able to grasp such deep truths, were given a kind of religious teaching in the so called 'Wihinei', in which this knowledge was visualized and personified, to give them something tangible [...] bodily perceptible."<sup>89</sup>

To forestall misuse and persecution by the Christian church,<sup>90</sup> Armanic truths were codified and taught in what List calls 'Armanenschulen' (Arman schools) through bodily practices and songs. "Odin taught his arts through runes and chants [...]"<sup>91</sup>. The Arman-schools were tasked with an exoteric and esoteric education of the outer appearance, the senses and emotions<sup>92</sup>: "Theory and practice were - just as spirit and the body - inseparably connected"<sup>93</sup>. This way, Aryan wisdom was 'inherited' in corporal knowledge<sup>94</sup> over generations: "The primal knowledge [...] remains his own, the own of the all, it is the sum of experiences of thousands of generations, which is preserved in [rune-]script and inherited."<sup>95</sup>

87 Ibid., p. 10.

88 Wiwjorra, Ingo (1999): Die deutsche Vorgeschichtsforschung und ihr Verhältnis zu Nationalismus und Rassismus, In: Puschner, Handbuch zur "völkischen Bewegung", pp. 186-207.

89 My translation. Original: "Dem Volke selbst, das ja niemals in seiner großen Masse befähigt war, so tiefe Wahrheiten zu erfassen, wurde eine Art von Religionslehre in den sogenannten 'Wihinei' gegeben, in welcher jene Erkenntnisse verbildlicht und personifiziert wurden, um ihm etwas faßbares [...] körperlich Erkennbares zu bieten [...]" (List, Die Armanenschaft der Ario-Germanen, p. 17).

90 Ibid., 29.

91 "Durch Runen und Gesänge lehrte Odin seine Künste [...]" (ibid., p. 27).

92 Ibid., pp. 31f.

93 My translation. Original: "Theorie und Praxis war — wie Geist und Körper — untrennbar verbunden [...]" (ibid., p. 30).

94 Ibid., p. 29.

95 "[...] das [...] Urwissen bleibt sein Eigen, das Eigen des Alls, es ist die Summe der Erfahrungen von Tausenden Generationen, das durch die [Runen-]Schrift erhalten und weitervererbt wird." (List, Das Geheimnis der Runen, p. 5).

The “corporeal eye”<sup>96</sup> was thought to transcend the individual presence and capture the past, remembering through emotional embodiment. And rune-practices were used to turn attention to the inner life, as ‘media’ for concentration, self-discipline and meditation.<sup>97</sup> Thus, achieving a strong sense of interiority simultaneously meant to realize of one’s own divinity and to cultivate racial purity. The disciple was to ‘feel into’ the universe and to incorporate his inherited racial knowledge. Ariosophy posited that past, momentary present, and future were actually one single process of an ‘organic becoming’<sup>98</sup>, meaning an evolutionary development towards God or the world spirit.

List’s Ariosophy, like much Voelkisch thought, cannot simply be reduced to what we often imagine racist ideology to be – vulgar and reductionist. I argue instead that an understanding of the complexity of such discourses conditions their analysis and critique, including their echoes and continuities beyond Voelkisch discourse. List drew on a German idealist notion of dialectic development towards an absolute subject, albeit though emphasizing a materialist turn.<sup>99</sup> He posed a conscious ‘nurture of an organic progression’<sup>100</sup> – in accordance with the materialist turn taken by evolutionists and eugenicists following Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919). Organic progression, according to List, could only be a ‘spiritual-corporeal development’<sup>101</sup>, passing through the stage of becoming the Aryan race, which is potentially and actually already inherent in the present. Ludwig Woltmann’s (1871-1907) work *Historischer Materialismus* (Historical Materialism) for instance explicitly combines Hegel, Marx, and Darwin to emphasize the need for an evolutionary historic materialism. Woltmann’s Neo-Kantian conception draws on Spinoza to counter German idealism and reconcile

96 Ibid.

97 “Sie waren [...] ‘Sammlungsmittel’ zum Zweck der Autosuggestion, ‘Medien’ zum konzentrierten Denken, zur intensiven Meditation. Die Bezeichnung als ‘Heilszeichen’ ist daher vollkommen gerechtfertigt, so wie auch die andere Benennung als ‘Runen’, nämlich die ‘Raunenden’, die ‘Geheimnisvollsprechenden’.” (List, *Das Geheimnis der Runen*, p. 24).

98 Ibid., pp. 14f.

99 The philosophical overtones of Hegelian idealism are at this point not accidental. Rather, the commonalities between the concepts of the subject and historical progress of List’s occultism and Hegel’s philosophy pose the question of common epistemological assumptions. The philosophical roots of modern subjectivity, bourgeois interiority and the racialized discourse of the White, Aryan self need to be seen in their common genealogies.

100 List *Die Armanenschaft der Ario-Germanen*, p. 15.

101 Ibid.

spirit and body into a single monism.<sup>102</sup> His logic of evolutionary materialism then is a progressive development toward an absolute, bodily-spiritual subject which takes racial constitution as a condition for subjectivity.

Drawing on the myth of Armanic schools, List proposes a life-affirming, corporeal-spiritual education.

High heroism is thus the imperative of humanity, to perfect it and guide it to the purpose of its development. But this development must be a spiritual-corporal one, therefore life-affirming and not life-denying, therefore: Gay enjoyment of life without forgetting the eternal, therefore: not asceticism but education of the body and strict discipline of the spirit over it.<sup>103</sup>

List's emotional and corporal cultivation of Aryanism through rune-practices was taken up most prominently in the concept of rune-gymnastics in the 1920s and 30s.

### **'Affective Economies'<sup>104</sup> of Rune-Gymnastics and Dance**

In the 1920s Friedrich Bernhard Marby (1882-1966) and in the 1930s Siegfried Adolf Kummer<sup>105</sup> (1899-1977) propagated practical programs of rune-gymnastics (*Runengymnastik*) on the basis of List's inherited memory, Theosophical and Buddhist practices. Rune-gymnastics were a racially bound form of Yoga and had overlaps in personnel to the Voelkisch yoga-reception.<sup>106</sup> As Bernd Wedemeyer-Kolwe has pointed out, rune-gymnastics "operated at the interface between the Voelkisch movement, the new-spirit movement [Neugeistbewegung], nudism [Freikörperkultur], and yoga-reception"<sup>107</sup>. The latter had been appropriated in Germany in the end of the 19th century mainly through the institutionalization of the transnationally situated Theosophical

102 Woltmann, Ludwig (1900): *Der Historische Materialismus. Darstellung und Kritik der Marxistischen Weltanschauung*, Düsseldorf, p. 305.

103 My translation. Original: "So ist das hohe Heldentum im Menschentum geboten, um es zu vervollkommen und dem Ziele seiner Entwicklung zuzuführen. Diese Entwicklung muß aber eine geist-körperliche sein, darum eine lebensbejahende und nicht lebensverneinende, darum: freudiger Lebensgenuß ohne das Ewige zu vergessen, darum: keine Askese, wohl aber Schulung des Körpers und strenge Disziplin des Geistes über denselben." (List, *Die Armanenschaft der Ario-Germanen*, p. 16).

104 Ahmed, Sara (2004): *Affective Economies*, *Social Text* 22.2, pp. 117-139.

105 Originally named Adolf Marx Karl Kummer.

106 My translation. Original: "Damit operierte die Runengymnastik an der Schnittstelle zwischen Yogarezeption, völkischer Bewegung, Neugeistbewegung und Freikörperkultur." (Wedemeyer-Kolwe, *Der neue Mensch*, p. 175).

107 *Ibid.*

Society in Germany<sup>108</sup> and the institutionalization of Buddhist societies<sup>109</sup>. According to the rune-practitioners, however, Asian culture and religion was initially brought to the East by tribes of Aryans or 'Atlantists' who had migrated there from Northern Europe.<sup>110</sup>

Rune-gymnastics are one example of how our retrospective classification of our objects of inquiry as either 'alternative', 'leftist', 'liberal' and 'emancipative' on the one hand, or 'proto-fascist' on the other, conceals multiple relations within their history. In framing one separate Voelkisch movement, read against the backdrop of National Socialism that was yet to come, the multiple constitutive connections between Voelkisch, Life-reform, Theosophical, Buddhist, Anarcho-syndicalist, Zionist and other movements as well as their transnational genealogies are often neglected. But it is these interconnections that need to be addressed to trace the continuation of racialized thought and practice into fields where we might not expect them.

In his work *Heilige Runenmacht. Wiedergeburt des Armanentums durch Runenübungen und Tänze* (Holy Power of Runes: The Rebirth of Arman through Rune-Practices and Dance) Siegfried Adolf Kummer describes the purpose of rune-gymnastics as follows:

The rune-practices and -dances have to first and foremost strengthen the racial feeling and sensation and guide the practitioner to train a true, Germanic, essential personality, his self-confidence, will, sensitivity as well as to raise his inherited remembering and create an unerring, ordered cognition, a healthy spirit, soul and body. Through the rune-practices the disciple gains high, wise-magical, occult faculties. What the Indian achieves through yoga-schooling, the Germanic gains through rune-practices.<sup>111</sup>

108 Zander, Helmut (2007): *Anthroposophie in Deutschland. Theosophische Weltanschauung und gesellschaftliche Praxis 1884–1945. Band 1*, Göttingen.

109 Muermel, Heinz (2006): *Der Beginn des institutionellen Buddhismus in Deutschland - Der Buddhistische Missionsverein in Deutschland (Sitz Leipzig)*, in: Universität Hamburg; Asien-Afrika-Institut: Weiterbildendes Studium: Bd. 11: Buddhismus in Geschichte und Gegenwart - Erneuerungsbewegungen, Hamburg, pp. 157-173.

110 Katt, Walter (1934): *Indogermanen oder Ariogermanen?* In: *Neudeutsche Zeitung* Nr. 66, 1. Juni 1934, p. 3.

111 My translation. Original: "Die Runenübungen und -tänze sollen vor allem das Rassegefühl und -empfinden stärken und den Uebenden zu einer wahren, germanischen, kernigen Persönlichkeit heranbilden, das Selbstvertrauen, den Willen, die Sensitivität, sowie das Erberinnern heben und in ihm ein zielsicheres, geordnetes Gedankenleben, einen gesunden Geist, Seele, Körper schaffen. Durch die Runenübung gelangt der Schüler zu hohen, weismagischen, okkulten Fähigkeiten. Was der Inder durch Yogha-Schulung erreicht, das erlangt der Germane durch Runenübungen." (Kummer, Siegfried Adolf (1932): *Heilige Runenmacht. Wiedergeburt des Armanentums durch Runenübungen und Tänze*, Hamburg, p. 13).

Marby and Kummer were not the only advocates of rune-practices<sup>112</sup> and were furthermore widely excluded from competitive associations of the *Ariosophische Kulturzentrale* [Central Ariosophical Cultural Association] founded in 1931.<sup>113</sup> They did, however, first elaborate rune-practices into an integrated system of gymnastics. Marby's *Bund der Runenforscher* [League of Rune-Scientists] and Kummer's *Bund Runa* [League of Runa] were typical in the landscape of reform organizations in Germany, competing for clientele. Their writings were re-issued, cited among the Voelkisch and beyond, translated into other languages, and were also practiced.<sup>114</sup> Between themselves, Marby and Kummer maintained a competitive relationship, each claiming to have first laid out their system of rune-gymnastics.<sup>115</sup>

Like List, Marby and Kummer conceptualized rune-gymnastics as an ancient form of meditation and emotionally-corporeal education. "Rune-positions and dance were the main educational means of the old Aryan-Germanic priest-rune-schools and lead to the highest prophetism."<sup>116</sup> Friedrich Marby explicitly posits rune-gymnastics as a means of 'Aufzucht' (up-raising) to racially purify the disciple internally and externally,<sup>117</sup> and merges race and culture. "Culture is racial order and racial breeding. [...] Culture is higher development. There is no higher development without nursing of the racial genetic material and of the corporeally-spiritual higher values. Culture is up-raising. Up-raising is culture."<sup>118</sup> Thus, environmental influences were believed to influence and individuals' biological, racial traits within one lifespan. Whereas most Voelkisch authors would reference Darwin instead of Lamarck, 'Darwinism' was a term often used to designate evolutionary thought in

112 Goodrick-Clarke (2004): *Die okkulten Wurzeln des Nationalsozialismus*, Wiesbaden, pp. 141f.

113 Wedemeyer-Kolwe, *Der neue Mensch*, pp. 174f.

114 I will speak about the implementation of actual practice in the following section.

115 Wedemeyer-Kolwe, *Der neue Mensch*, p. 180.

116 My translation. Original: "Runenstellungen und -tanz waren das Haupterziehungsmittel der alten arisch-germanischen Priester-Runenschulen und führte zum höchsten Seher- und Prophetentum." (Kummer, *Heilige Runenmacht*, p. 18).

117 Wedemeyer-Kolwe, *Runengymnastik*, p. 331.

118 My translation. Original: "Eine Zeit die keine Kultur hat, weiß auch nicht was der Sinn des Wortes Kultur eigentlich ist. [...] Kultur lebt im ganzen Volke oder ist keine Kultur. Kultur ist Rassenordnung und Rassenaufzucht. [...] Kultur ist Höherentwicklung. Ohne Pflege des rassischen Erbgutes und der körperlich-seelischen höheren Werte gibt es keine Höherentwicklung. Kultur ist Aufzucht. Die Aufzucht ist Kultur." (Marby, Friedrich Bernhard (1935): *Rassische Gymnastik als Aufzuchtsweg – Buch 2: Die Rosengärten und das ewige Land der Rasse*. Stuttgart, pp. 9f.).

general<sup>119</sup>, frequently including Lamarckian trajectories. The Darwinian model of natural selection in the second half of the Nineteenth Century was, especially in Germany, highly contested. The influential writings of the zoologist and monist Ernst Haeckel, “saw evolution proceeding through the accumulation of Lamarckian acquired characteristics selected for fitness in a Darwinian fashion”<sup>120</sup>. Haeckel’s evolutionary Monism was not only a central reference for many Voelkisch writers, but also influenced the development of eugenics and racial hygiene in Germany.<sup>121</sup>

Rune-gymnastics were thus to change the racial body of the disciple and influence genetic disposition – drawing on the Aryans’ corporeal memory. Building upon contemporary theories of mineralogy and energetic waves,<sup>122</sup> racial energies were thought to penetrate the material body, being only seemingly separate from the universe. To Marby and Kummer, substance and spirit were not different in kind, but in density and frequency. Thus, human skin was an accumulation of energy, surrounded and permeated by a ‘fine-material’ body, its ‘aura’ or ‘karma’, transitioning into the outer world. Having the history of his (or, less often, her) race ‘born into him’, the disciple could transcend time and space. ‘Racial energies’ of his ancestors and the contemporary racial community could be activated in his own body<sup>123</sup> – by taking certain bodily postures or movements, sounds and breathing. Mantras accompanied meditation:

My body is now externally purified, while breathing in I take in pure waves of the all, strengthen and purify myself internally and while breathing out, I emit all the bad substances and slag from my body, the fine waves of the all infiltrate through my neuroplexus into my sympathetic nervous system and my solar plexus and cast out all the negative sentiments and emotions with exhalation from my body. I feel purified, healthy, strengthened, and free.<sup>124</sup>

119 Larson, Edward J. (2009): The Reception of Darwinism in the Nineteenth Century: A Three Part Story, in: *Science & Christian Belief*, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 3-24.

120 Ibid., p. 9.

121 Mann, Gunter (1993): *Biologismus – Vorstufen und Elemente einer Medizin im NS*, in: Bleker, Johanna et al. (Hg.): *Medizin im „Dritten Reich“*, Köln, pp. 25 ff.

122 ‘Waves’ and ‘radiation’ played a central role in several coeval discourses. The rapid development of telegraphy since Morse’s invention in 1837, the proof of radio waves in 1887 and their subsequent utilization, and the invention of X-rays in 1895 opened a wide speculative space in popular, academic, and military discourses.

123 Kummer, *Heilige Runenmacht*, p. 104.

124 My translation. Original: “Mein Körper ist jetzt äußerlich gereinigt, beim Einatmen nehme ich reine Allwellen in mir auf, stärke und reinige mich innerlich und beim Ausatmen stoße ich alle schlechten Stoffe und Schlacke aus meinem Körper, die feinen Allwellen dringen durch mein Nervengeflecht in den Sympathikus und das



For each of the 18 runes, Marby and Kummer describe in fine detail how to breathe, how to pronounce certain letters, in which tone they should be sung as meditation, how long and with which attention the postures should be held and in which shakra (energetic point — fig. 3) of the body attention was to be led.

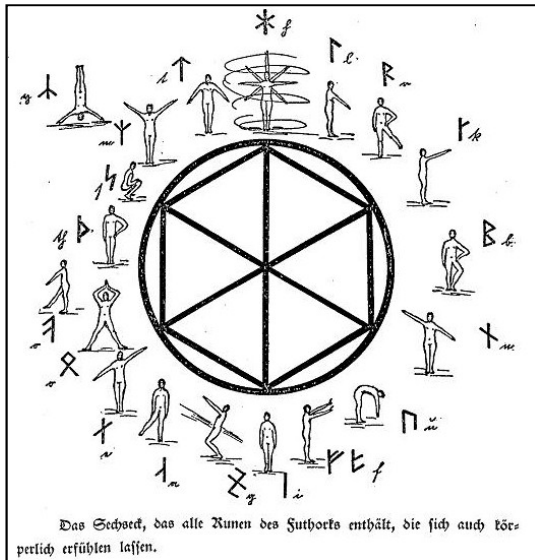


Figure 2: Kummer 1932, p. 30

“The hexagon, which contains all runes of the Futhort, which can be bodily felt”

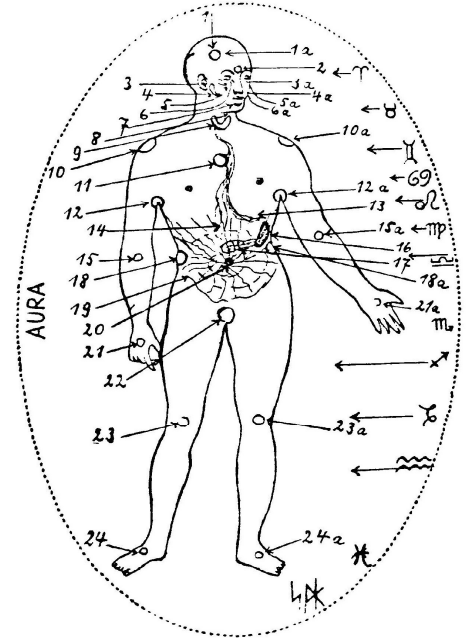


Figure 3: Kummer 2004, p. 26

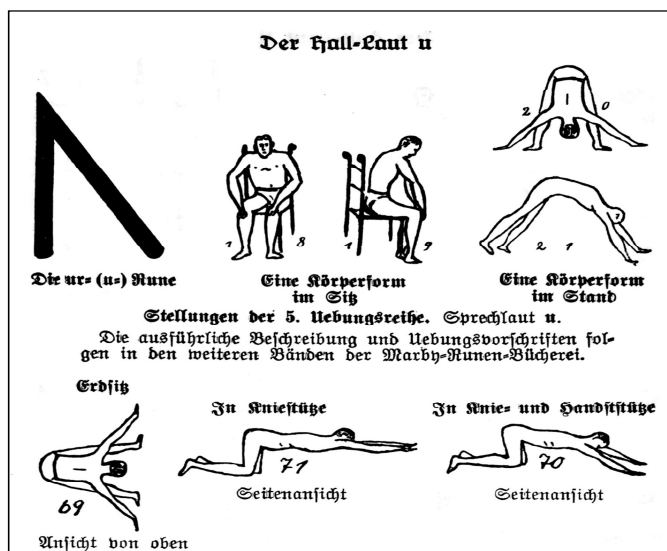


Figure 4: Marby 1997, p. 115

Sonnengeflecht und treiben alle negativen Stimmungen und Gefühle beim Ausatmen aus meinem Körper. Ich fühle mich gereinigt, gesund, gestärkt und frei.” (Kummer, Heilige Runenmacht, p. 59).

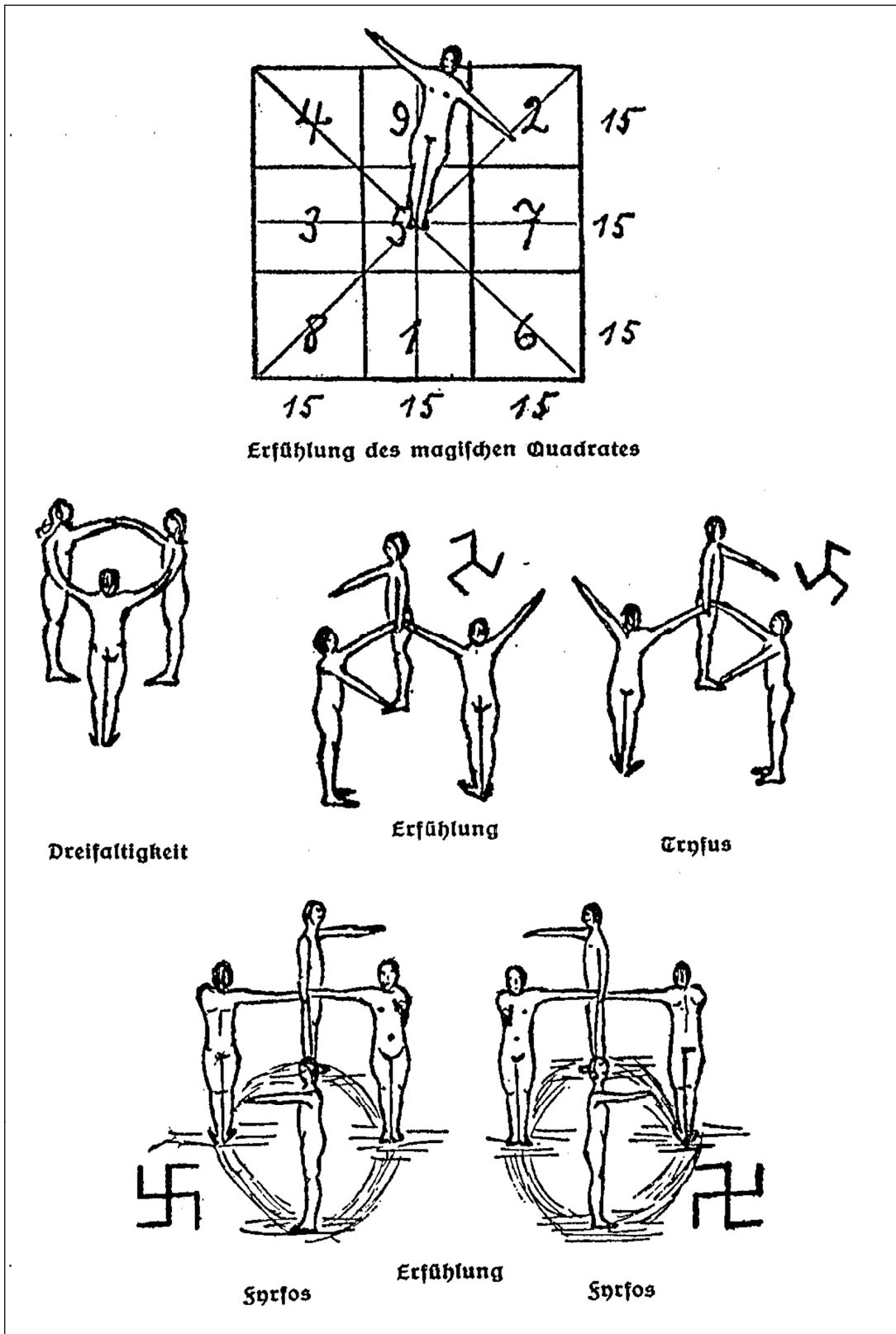


Figure 5: Kummer 1932, p. 95

From individual positions and gymnastics (fig. 4), the disciple was to proceed to sequences of movements and to collective runes and dance (fig. 5). As Dr. E. D. Rasser pointed out in this article *Rhythmische Gymnastik* (Rhythmic Gymnastics) in a *Hammer* edition of 1910, rhythm

was widely believed to be the foundation of bodily and emotional functioning as regulation of balance and organic flow. In this sense, Rasser believed that bodily health and disposition, emotionality, personality and morality could be educated through automatized rhythmic movement and dance.<sup>125</sup>

Willibald Hentschel had written about ‘Tanzauslese’ in 1911, outlining a racial dance-selection to serve as a more civilized form of the former Germanic selection by fight. According to Hentschel, dance was to facilitate the Aryan holistic education of the inner and outer being. He additionally claimed that dance was used in Germanic tribes to select the fittest, most spiritual and rhythmic dancers to engage in reproduction.<sup>126</sup> List named the violin and flute as magic tools for revival, which were used to excite and direct love and desire in the dancers.<sup>127</sup> However, dancing was only one example of the manner in which emotions should be collectively directed with a racial and eugenic purpose. Throughout Kummer’s and Marby’s writing questions of hygiene and breeding are related to the practices which were to mediate and cultivate emotionality. As in figure 5, Marby and Kummer used the concepts “Erführung” (fig. 5) or “Einführung”, ‘feeling oneself into’ the rune: “The runes are humanly, corporeal signs, which I have to feel in their depth, conceive and use in the right way.”<sup>128</sup>

In rune-gymnastics, emotions are not inner states but practices “emerging from bodily dispositions conditioned by a social context”<sup>129</sup>. As Monique Scheer suggests, emotions are not something we have but something we do<sup>130</sup> through strategies of mobilizing, naming, communicating, and regulating. A “knowing” or “mindful body”<sup>131</sup> remembers experiences and performs emotions in cultural forms of hexis and habitus. Scheer aims to dissolve the dualisms of discourse and practice, mind and body, emotions and reason, interior and exterior. Subjectivation, in this sense, goes beyond the effects of verbal

125 Rasser, Dr. E. D. (1910): Rhythmische Gymnastik, in: Der Hammer Nr. 193, Juli 1910, Leipzig.

126 Hentschel, Willibald (1911): Tanzauslese? in: Der Hammer Dezember 1911, Leipzig, p. 636. Dancing remained a central topos in the Nordic and esoteric Voelkisch circles, the Artamanes, the ‘Neue Schar’ (new crowd) around Friedrich Muck-Lamberty and broader circles of the German youth movement.

127 List, *Das Geheimnis der Runen*, p. 22.

128 My translation. Original: “Die Runen sind menschliche, körperhafte Zeichen, die ich in ihren Tiefen erföhlen, erfassen und richtig gebrauchen lernen muß.” (Kummer, *Heilige Runenmacht*, p. 53).

129 Scheer, *Are Emotions a Kind of Practice*, p. 193.

130 *Ibid.*, p. 194.

131 *Ibid.*, p. 205.

interpellation and conscious self-empowerment<sup>132</sup>. Sara Ahmed offers a framework to analyze how emotions function to shape individual and collective “bodies as forms of action”<sup>133</sup> in their relation to signs, objects, and others. “Emotions are relational: they involve (re)actions or relations of ‘towardness’ and ‘awayness’ in relation to such objects.”<sup>134</sup> In doing so, they create the situational effects of an inside and outside of the subject or collective<sup>135</sup> – and carve the very surfaces of bodies as well as the proximity of subjects toward each other. What we call a specific emotion is an accumulation of social relations and normative attributions over time. Our perception of demarcated emotions as separate ‘things’ - such as love, hate, fear or disgust - is a product of concealment of the historical practices and relations that produced them. Recovering how emotions work means to recover the complexity of social their histories draw upon.

Emotions are thereby not properties of subjects or objects. Nor is the other inherently ‘disgusting’ or ‘fearsome.’ She is, rather, generated as an object of fear through the movement between signs and by how they are ‘stuck’ together through “past histories of association: N[...], animal, bad, mean, ugly”<sup>136</sup>. The Voelkisch were intentionally constituting ‘the German’ and particular modes of distance by emotion-work. Affective relations were framed into specific emotions, binding the feeling individual to a specific collective while creating emotional modes of distance to others considered ‘ungerman’, of ‘mixed’ or of ‘lower’ racial descent. In his essay *Ueber deutsche Erziehung* (On German education), Georg Meurer writes in 1903: “An educator can do a lot of good for his people, if he does not repress honest boys’ hatred, but redirects it against the Ungerman.”<sup>137</sup> Thus, the work on affect in rune-gymnastics was a means of producing the very boundaries of the individual and collective body.<sup>138</sup> Emotions are modes of attribution to and shaping of bodies. In this attribution of a seemingly emotional ‘thing’ or concept to a subject as its inner state, the very borders and surfaces of subjects,

132 As in the (post)Foucauldian conception of subjectivation, for instance in Judith Butler’s approach to sex, gender, and subjectivity. Butler, Judith (2001): *Psyche der Macht. Das Subjekt der Unterwerfung*, Frankfurt a.M., p. 81.

133 Ahmed, Sara (2004): *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. New York, p. 4.

134 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

135 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

136 Ahmed, *Affective Economies*, p. 127.

137 My translation. Original: “Ein Erzieher kann viel Gutes für sein Volk tun, wenn er ehrlichen Knabenhaß nicht unterdrückt, ihn vielmehr auf Undeutsches lenkt.” (*ibid.*).

138 Ahmed, *Affective Economies*, p. 128.

their alliances, positions and orientations towards each other, are produced.<sup>139</sup>

'Disgust,' for instance, is not an emotion arising in the subject or being caused by another subject. Rather, 'the disgusted' is a historically-specific figure that is situationally performed. It aligns 'the disgusted' with others and orients her against other others. But because such nurtured dispositions are framed as inner feelings reacting to something 'in' the other they attain their function of a legitimating immediacy.

In this vein, Armin Wilhelm writes in his essay 'Die Rassen-Abneigung und ihr Geheimnis' (The Racial Aversion and its Mystery):

Some of the most mysterious appearances of life are those sentiments in human interaction, which can be called sympathy and antipathy. It is an involuntary emotion independent from reasonable consideration, when one appears to us as likable, another as unpleasant, or downright anti-likable, when we feel drawn towards one, and disgusted by the other, without being able to point out any specific reasons for our proclivity or reluctance. This phenomenon is not limited to the communal life of individuals but is also apparent in the relation of tribes of one folk toward each other, in the life of different folks from one descent living next to each other or together, and especially in the mutual relationships between different races.<sup>140</sup>

Displacing affect as a relation by affect as a natural, inner state legitimizes and naturalizes the racist feeling. Racism appears as an immediate, (God)given state – what is actually a social relation is fetishized into a given thing.

'Racial aversion' or 'disgust' functions to produce 'the disgusted,' aligns her with a community of like-feeling others and produces their distance and hierarchy towards 'the disgusting.' The performativity of the speech act 'That's disgusting!' generates not only the subject of speech and the object that is named but also "generates a community of

139 Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, p. 8.

140 My translation. Original: "Zu den rätselhaften Erscheinungen des Lebens gehören jene im Verkehre der Menschen untereinander entstehenden und beobachteten Empfindungen, die man als Sympathie und Antipathie bezeichnet. Es ist eine unwillkürliche, von der verstandesmäßigen Ueberlegung unabhängige Gefühls-Regung, wenn uns Einer sympathisch, ein Anderer dagegen unsympathisch oder geradezu antipathisch ist, wenn wir uns zu einem hingezogen, von dem Anderen dagegen abgestoßen fühlen, ohne daß wir für unsere Neigung oder Abneigung bestimmte Gründe angeben können. Diese Erscheinung beschränkt sich aber nicht auf das Zusammen-Leben Einzelner, sie tritt auch hervor in dem Verhältnis der Stämme eines und desselben Volkes zueinander, im Neben- und Miteinander-Leben der einzelnen Völker gleicher Abstammung und ganz besonders in den gegenseitigen Beziehungen der verschiedenen Rassen." (Wilhelm, *Die Rassen-Abneigung*, p. 187).

those who are bound together through the shared condemnation of a disgusting object or event”<sup>141</sup>. And this process happens not only on a linguistic level. The repetitions of emotional practices shape bodily dispositions that are performed unconsciously rather than naturally or immediately. Thus, affect-regulation and the framing of affect as a natural, subjective state served to maintain racial hierarchy, hygiene and breeding.

What appears as ‘an emotion’ originating ‘in’ the subject and as being ‘about’ or ‘being caused’ by an object (which can be a person), is a fetishization or objectification of historical-social relations in the Marxian sense.<sup>142</sup> Marx’ political economy functioned by naturalizing the socially produced subjects and objects as naturally given, thus abstracting from their history of becoming. Drawing on Derrida, Ann Stoler reminds us that “concepts conceal the scenes of their making”<sup>143</sup>. The seemingly self-identical concept of a particular emotion can thus only be upheld by veiling the contested, violent and exclusionary social relations that produced them as the naturalized objects we perceive. The effect of this socio-historical accumulation are concepts and power relations, that prefigure the possible positions of those who use and enter them. Racial and racist constitution and hierarchy work through “‘multisensory complexes’ of unseen racial attributes”<sup>144</sup>. In what Ann Stoler calls an “emotional economy”<sup>145</sup>, sentiments are deeply intertwined with knowledge production and at the core of colonial political reason itself. With Sara Ahmeds concept of “affective economies”<sup>146</sup>, the very identification of single emotion-concepts can furthermore be regarded as a central modality of the politics of emotions.<sup>147</sup> To recapture the political, socio-historical relations producing subjectivity, Ahmed understands “affective economies” as orienting bodies towards each other and repeatedly delimiting action. Through the repetition of these conditioned actions over time, individual and collective bodies take their shape and borders. An ‘economy of fear’ *does* something: “it reestablishes distance between

141 Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, p. 94.

142 Marx, Karl (1867): *Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Oekonomie. Erster Band*, in: MEW 23, Berlin, p. 85.

143 Stoler, Ann Laura (2016): *Duress. Imperial Durabilities in Our Times*, Durham/London, p. 68.

144 Stoler, Ann Laura: *Along the Archival Grain*, p. 36.

145 *Ibid.*, pp. 41, 68.

146 *Ibid.*

147 Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*.

bodies whose difference is read off the surface, as a reading that produces the surface (shivering, recoloring)”<sup>148</sup>.

The Voelkisch performed such surfacing constituting a threat to the purity of white interiority. The fantasy of white purity is upheld by the fear of penetration and contamination.

The involuntary, hostile repulsion, which develops in the relation between kinsmen from different races and which often consciously manifests itself as reciprocal disgust or aversion, is obviously based upon the sensation, that the alien appearance, which one is approaching or which is approaching oneself, carries a threat for the own self.<sup>149</sup>

The desire for whiteness was upheld by the economy of fear. Thus, there are no ‘good’ or ‘bad’ emotions. Rather, affective economies do different work in producing bodies and proximities and are deeply intertwined with morality and normativity. For instance: hate or disgust build relations of distance and demarcation. The performance of love produces communal bonding. But whenever love re-inscribes a community, it also frames its borders and delimits who is excluded. Love thereby builds relations of interiority and exteriority. Theodor Fritsch writes in his essay *Haß und Liebe* (Hate and Love): “As light is not possible without shade, so there is no real love without it’s counterplay: hate.” “Who passionately loves the good, will have to loathe and hate good’s enemy.”<sup>150</sup> Any community values itself as loving and virtuous. And in this very moralization, it produces its borders and exclusions. Voelkisch protagonists also aimed to educate themselves into loving beings. In the rune-practices, the practitioner should daily recite a mantra to educate his benevolent self: “‘My gaze radiates kindness, love, harmony and sympathy’. And this he has to think and wish for so intensely, that, when he looks at himself in the mirror, he sees forceful, benevolent, loving eyes shining back at him.”<sup>151</sup>

148 Ibid., p. 126.

149 My translation. Original: “Die unwillkürliche feindselige Abneigung, die sich im Verkehr zwischen Angehörigen verschiedenartiger Rassen entwickelt und die oft gerade zu als gegenseitiger Ekel oder Widerwillen wohl zum Bewußtsein kommt, beruht offenbar auf der Empfindung, daß die fremdartige Erscheinung, der man sich nähert, oder die an einen herantritt, eine Gefährdung für das eigene Selbst in sich birgt.” Wilhelm, Armin (1902): Die Rassen-Abneigung und ihr Geheimnis, In: Der Hammer Nr. 7, Januar 1902, Leipzig, p. 187.

150 My translation. Original: “Wie kein Licht ohne Schatten denkbar ist, so giebt es auch keine echte Liebe ohne ihr Widerspiel: den Haß.” “Wer das Gute leidenschaftlich liebt, wird den Feind des Guten verabscheuen und hassen müssen.” (Fritsch, Theodor (1902): *Haß und Liebe*, in: Der Hammer, Leipzig, p. 190).

151 My translation. Original: “‘Mein Blick strahlt Güte, Liebe, Harmonie und Wohlwollen aus.’ - Und dies muss er so intensiv denken und wünschen, daß, wenn er in den

Each ‘affective economy’ — of love, hate, disgust, fear etc. — is an analytic perspective into the complex construction of self, community and exclusion. In the Voelkisch construction of Aryan race on a collective level, economies of love were often tied to economies of disgust and hate.

In such strong feeling of unity therefore we do not tolerate anyone among us who renounces this public spirit and opposes our common life and cultural values in a hostile manner. Who does not recognize this real and ideal community, who does not approve of our laws of life and does not participate in the common life goal – i.e. the elevation of our species [/race] – those we cannot – or only under the strictest constraints – allow to live among us.<sup>152</sup>

This emotional argument secures the communal space as a normatively higher, naturally good space, from which de facto anyone who does not racially belong is excluded. The fact that Fritsch does not mention Aryanism, whiteness, or race in this quote is quite telling: The white space functions as a space of norm which is a ‘comfort zone’ for as long as it is not entered by anyone disrupting and thereby making explicit the norm itself.

## Shaping Aryan Subjectivity - Experiences and Letters of Rune-Practitioners

Rune-practices were not restricted to publications but were widely practiced, for instance in Kummer’s rune-school *Runa* in Dresden<sup>153</sup> and at several practical workshops and health events within circles of the life-reform and nudist movement.<sup>154</sup>

Spiegel sieht, ihm kraftvolle, wohlwollende, liebevolle Augen entgegenstrahlen.” (Kummer, Heilige Runenmacht, p. 58).

152 My translation. Original: “In diesem starken Einheits-Gefühle dulden wir darum auch Niemand unter uns, der diesen Gemeingeist verleugnet und sich unserem gemeinsamen Kultur- und Lebenswert feindselig entgegen stellt. Wer diese reale und ideale Gemeinschaft nicht anerkennt, wer unsere Lebens-Gesetze nicht billigt und nicht teil nimmt an dem gemeinsamen Lebensziel - d. i. die Erhöhung unserer Art - den können wir nicht - oder nur unter strengen Einschränkungen unter uns gewähren lassen.” (Fritsch, Natur und Mensch, p. 331).

153 Wedemeyer-Kolwe, Runengymnastik, p. 333.

154 Furthermore, there has been a recent revival of rune-gymnastics in the present. New publications on the issue in esoteric and right-wing circles in Germany and beyond have been published. For a more detailed account of contemporary adaptations of rune-gymnastics in neo-pagan movements see: Gründer, Runengymnastik. The Russian page Rutube offers free audiobooks of almost all of



Hans Surén's German Gymnastics [Deutsche Gymnastik] became famous in Germany during the 1920s, was practiced as the primary form of gymnastics by all fractions of the flourishing nudist movement and was widely popular amongst the German public.<sup>155</sup> Surén claimed to combine the different physiological and psychological insights and research on sports and gymnastics in an individualized system of specifically German-appropriate gymnastics that was to renew the Germanic people.<sup>156</sup> Although German Gymnastics were a distinct system of practices, Surén also praised and recommended rune-gymnastics in the Voelkisch monthly journal *Die Sonne* (The Sun), where Bernhard Marby frequently published.<sup>157</sup>

Surén's gymnastics were practiced by diverse social fractions and were offered in multiple workshops and seminars that could be attended for a day or a week, the so-called *Surén-Wochen* (Surén-weeks) in Birkenheide at the Motzener lake.



Figure 6: Photograph taken by Julius Groß: Gymnastics on a meadow, 1925

Marby's writings and YouTube provides wide variety of manuals for rune-gymnastics.

155 Möhring, *Marmorleiber*, pp. 66f.

156 *Ibid.*

157 "Ich habe schon mehrmals in Ihrem außerordentlich interessanten Runenheft lesen können. Mit größter Hochachtung erfüllt mich Ihr Wissen. [...] Es wäre dringend zu wünschen, daß Ihre Forschungsergebnisse allgemein bekannt würden [...]. Tatsächlich kann man in die Gymnastik erhebende Gebete hineinlegen, noch mehr natürlich in den rhythm. Tanz." (*Die Sonne* 1924, Nr. 29, p. 651).

Letters from Marby's disciples were published in *Die Neudeutsche Zeitung* (The New-German Newspaper) and its supplement *Der Runenforscher* (The Rune-Scientist) in *Der Eigene Weg* (The Own Way) and *Forschung und Erfahrung* (Research and Experience). *Die Neudeutsche Zeitung* and *Der Runenforscher* were issued every two weeks from 1932 till 1936, each containing a rubric of 4 to 10 rune-practice reports. The league of rune scientists in Germany [Bund der Runenforscher Deutschlands] was founded in 1931 and Marby claimed that it represented only one of many societies within the International Union of Germanic Rune-Scientists [Internationaler Zentralverband der germanischen Runenforscher]. Marby himself claimed to have acquired 2000 members in 1936<sup>158</sup> and already in 1932 he had written of 60 000 'Germans who practice rune-gymnastics following the Marby system'<sup>159</sup> and "5000 notarized practitioners' reports"<sup>160</sup>. Accurate membership numbers, however, are difficult to prove.

Membership demanded to submit a monthly report on personal successes and failures with rune-gymnastics.<sup>161</sup> The reports center around several kinds of intentions and effects: First, the practitioners report on the capacity of healing themselves or others. Since rune-gymnastics assumed a connection of the individual to the universe, their racial ancestry, and to other Aryans, the disciple was to acquire healing capacities and send energy and luck to people in pain, illness, or financial hardship. From 1932 onwards, Marby published lists of members to be healed by his readers, who sent energetic waves via rune-practices. Christian love was displayed as German belief [Deutschgläubigkeit]: that the poor and weak 'brothers and sisters' of the Germanic people were to be strengthened and uplifted for the mutual benefit of the Aryan race.<sup>162</sup> Practitioners reported on healing their families, friends, or acquaintances and sending strength and health to those named in Marby's issued lists, or even to strangers: "Again and again sick people who cannot find a cure anywhere else and are looking for help come running to me."<sup>163</sup> However, the declaration of membership required attentiveness and selectivity toward the 'good and willing' elements and their distinction from 'immature and bad'

158 Wedemeyer-Kolwe, *Der neue Mensch*, p. 183.

159 *Neudeutsche Zeitung* Nr. 32, 4. Dezember 1932, p. 1.

160 *Ibid.*

161 *Der Runenforscher* Nr. 3, 15. Mai 1932, p. 3.

162 *Der Runenforscher* Nr. 7, 12. Juni 1932, p. 2.

163 "Immer wieder bestürmen mich kranke Menschen die anderswo Heilung nicht finden konnten und suchen Hilfe bei mir." *Der Runenforscher* Nr. 23, p.3.

elements of society. “I cannot help the good, if I let the evil pass.”<sup>164</sup> Thus, the practitioners learned an affective relationship to the racial group through empathy and mimetic identification. If emotions are relations that constitute proximity and delimitation, the very Aryan collective body and its borders were learned by the sharing experience. By entering an imagined and actually emotionally perceived relationship of empathy, identifying with the suffering Aryan fellow, the practitioners learned to feel themselves as part of a white Aryan community. Simultaneously, empathy is an affective relation of a particular kind - between the one giving empathy and the one receiving. Self-perception and communal bonds of empathy and compassion thus establish feelings and relations of superiority.<sup>165</sup>

Secondly, the disciples reported that rune-gymnastics helped them sustain a will to work, social approval, and financial betterment. Whereas the literature on the Voelkisch movement consistently assumes the Voelkisch to be predominantly male and of a bourgeois milieu, Marby’s readers were mostly lower class or strongly affected by the financial crisis of the 1930s, and frequently reported about unemployment and poverty<sup>166</sup>. Since “racial and imperial metaphors were applied to class distinctions in Europe”<sup>167</sup>, one might well argue that the practitioners of rune-gymnastics were countering their anxieties of class degradation by means of racial affiliation. If European bourgeois identity was linked to particular notions and habits of whiteness, racializing practices could be called upon to stabilize class positioning. The effects ascribed to the rune-gymnastics stated an increased energy-level, will, and readiness to work, a growing comfort even in poor financial conditions and sometimes its betterment<sup>168</sup>. Practitioners also reported increased social skills and social approval. Furthermore, roughly a third of the reports were written by women, frequently practicing to impact on their husband’s careers, but also their own well-being, their functioning in family duties, to impact their own careers and to comfort their fears. Self-care in racial terms was thus an interpellation of a particularly gendered and classed identity. In Sara Ahmed’s account, whiteness is not a property, but an orientation of bodies passed down through history, which conditions what certain bodies can or cannot do and how they take up social space; “whiteness is

164 My translation. Original: “Ich kann dem Guten nicht helfen, wenn ich die Bösen gewähren lasse” *Der Runenforscher* Nr. 7, p.3.

165 Fassin, Didier (2005): *Compassion and Repression: The Moral Economy of Immigration Policies in France*. *Cultural Anthropology* 20, pp. 363-387.

166 *Der Runenforscher* Nr. 3, p.3.; Nr. 9, p.3; Nr. 11, p.3; Nr. 14, p.3; Nr. 20, p.3.

167 Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*, p. 154.

168 *Der Runenforscher* Nr. 22, p.3; Nr. 25, p.4.

an orientation that puts certain things within reach.”<sup>169</sup> Practitioners performed feelings of confidence and anticipated their social and economic success. They taught themselves to appear happy, self-assured and indeed privileged. As far as whiteness is placed in histories of colonial “racialized politics of classification”<sup>170</sup>, it was based “not on skin color alone but on tenuously balanced assessments of who was judged to act with reason, affective appropriateness, and a sense of morality”<sup>171</sup>. In this sense, they did indeed learn their whiteness - though not as skin color, but as orientation, habit and social interaction - which were, in the visual register, bound to their white skin. Therein, whiteness is always already an intersectional category: it is gendered and classed. Insofar, learning a white, female, bourgeois identity is a specific form of subjectivation. What it means to be female in terms of desire, family duties, manners and emotionality, is a gender-role deeply entrenched in performances of race and class.

Thirdly, rune-gymnastics were used to improve and nurture the emotional condition and character of the disciples. Many reported a struggle with chronic tiredness and depression<sup>172</sup>, making it difficult to sustain their living, but also predicaments of racial attribution. Rune-gymnastics was to fill a void of self-confidence, fostering a feeling of security and strength, heightened energy, even happiness<sup>173</sup>, and satisfaction as well as a sensual awareness and focused perception. Sentiments of inferiority, frequently named as collective German pathology after the First World War, were partially attenuated<sup>174</sup>:

My thinking becomes more and more happy, cheerful, light and clear. The practices yield a deeply felt, quiescent consciousness, bigger and smaller worries more or less fall off from me, since one can feel the increased strength so much, that fear and trepidation no longer have space in the interior.<sup>175</sup>

Hans Umbrecht argues in his essay on *Körperreinigung durch Runengymnastik* (Bodily purification through rune-practices), that “[...]”

169 Ahmed, *A Phenomenology of Whiteness*, p. 154.

170 Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*, p. 8.

171 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

172 *Der Runenforscher* Nr. 39, p.4.

173 *Ibid.*; “Ganz langsam wachse ich in ein neues Leben hinein. Ich bin glücklich! Eine freudige Arbeitskraft wartet auf neue Tätigkeit.”

174 *Der Runenforscher* Nr. 11, p.4.

175 My translation. Original: “Glücklich, froh, licht und klar wird mehr und mehr mein Denken. Die Uebungen lösen ein tief empfundenen, ruhendes Bewußtsein aus, größere und kleine Sorgen fallen mehr oder weniger ab, da man die gesteigerte Kraft so sehr fühlt, daß Furcht und Bangen keinen Platz mehr im Innern haben.” *Der Runenforscher* Nr. 3, p.2.

Marby's rune-gymnastics make it possible to activate the racially intrinsic blood and to clean the body from racially foreign blood, by which a higher emotional sensitivity of the soul is reached and that, which Freud falsely called a complex, can be ruled out."<sup>176</sup>

Although the healing practices clearly demarcated a community of Germanic-Aryan people, the practices were first and foremost meant to strengthen the individual and its uplifted feeling of interiority and individuality. Reimar Dieter begins his introduction into 'Germanic character traits' by stating that, firstly, the Germanic soul has a firm consciousness of its individual personality and should not cultivate a 'herd' mentality.<sup>177</sup> Thus, what was learned was not primarily a set of particular, Aryan emotions – although they were at times indeed designated and prescribed, for instance as pride, loyalty or honor. Individual lives, however, did not follow such 'emotional scripts'<sup>178</sup>. Mandated prescriptions could never be fully attained.<sup>179</sup> Rather than a set of affective norms or particular emotions, I argue, the practitioners learned pursue an emotional and ethical interiority which was itself racialized as White.

Jewish people were considered to be incapable of deep emotionality and only oriented toward egoistic and calculable means – even where they did indeed display emotions, they were denied an authenticity of the feelings performed. Black people on the other hand were framed as 'instinctive, corporeal and passive' and Asians as 'rationally active'.<sup>180</sup> Real 'interiority', as an ethical and intentional navigation of emotions, was reserved for the Aryan-Germanic subject. And it was emotionality and sensation that were to combine rationality and corporeality into a full, self-conscious and ethical subjectivity. Thus, affect-control – or 'conscious sensation and affection', as often named in the sources – was itself an ability racialized as White. The notion of subjective interiority

176 "[...] ermöglicht also die Runengymnastik Marby's das arteigene Blut zu aktivieren, ja zu befähigen, den Körper von artfremdem Blut zu befreien, somit eine größere Seelenempfindlichkeit herbeizuführen und das, was Freud ganz irrtümlich als Komplexe bezeichnet, auszuschalten." *Der Runenforscher* Nr. 58, p.2.

177 Dieter, *Germanische Charakterzüge*, p. 1.

178 Rosenwein, Barbara (2006): *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*, Ithaca, N.Y./ London; Kastner, Robert (2005): *Emotion, Restraint and Community in Ancient Rome*, Oxford/ New York.

179 It is the „discrepancy between prescription and practice“ that Ann Stoler takes as the point of departure for the constitution of race, whiteness and Europeanness in the Dutch colonies and Europe itself. The contestation of practices is not a site to be ruled out in the making of race, but constitutive of it (Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*, pp. 2ff.). At this point, however, I can merely hint on these aspects within Voelkisch practices in Germany, but not develop them in depth.

180 Marby, *Der Runenforscher*, Nr. 37, 1933, p. 1.

was thus an effect of a racist relationship – in which non-white subjects were a priori excluded from the concept of full subjecthood and reduced to a (colored and marked) surface. Achille Mbembe speaks in this regard of an ‘image ontology’ which operates through a regime of visibility and a mode of ‘surfacing’ – denying ‘face’ and privileging ‘surface’. In this sense, the German concepts of the subject, personhood and interiority have racialized histories that were historically formed around whiteness.

Furthermore, the reports usually bound feeling and emotion to changes in bodily habitus and posture, as for instance the ‘typically Germanic’<sup>181</sup> proud and upright gait: “My body is still in transformation and the gait and whole posture have already become much firmer and more self-confident.”<sup>182</sup> Thus, affect is always already bodily and vice versa, and always bound to narrative framing and linguistic interpellation that place affective practices in causalities with race. An affective relation is a relation of an active (or stopped) body in the world - emotions are indeed practices<sup>183</sup> insofar as they can be realized as such in the racialized body schema delimiting reach and ‘doability’. Denying affective interiority and intentionality thus simultaneously means to passivate a body in the world, to limit agency.

Fourthly and finally, some rune-gymnastics practitioners reported changes in their actual physiology and corporeality. Signs of ‘cleansing’ were observed in strong sweating, rashes, a fluid coming from the ears, boils and abscesses<sup>184</sup> – which they read as the first step to the racial transformation. Changes in hexis and habitus, such mentioned in upright gait, straight posture or changes in the tone of voice were correlated with perceived corporal changes in skin, eye and hair color and the functioning of organs. In a re-issued letter from 1932 in *Neudeutsche Zeitung*, K.R. from B. writes:

Since I started doing rune-practices my blood has been detoxified and purified to such an extent that the yellowish skin-color has more and more vanished and has now yielded a very healthy skin-color. About which I am sincerely delighted. As I have already written to you recently, I once more noticed that my wife’s blond hair has truly lightened up without using any kind of bleaching.<sup>185</sup>

181 Ibid.

182 My translation. Original: “Mein Körper ist immernoch in der Umwandlung und mein Gang sowie die ganze Haltung sind schon viel fester und selbstbewußter geworden.” *Der Runenforscher* Nr. 3, p.2.

183 Scheer, *Are Emotions a Kind of Practice*, p. 193.

184 Marby, *Der Runenforscher*, Nr. 6, p. 8; Nr. 9, p. 3.

185 “Seitdem ich Runen-Übungen mache, hat sich mein Blut so entgiftet und gereinigt, dass die gelbliche Hautfarbe immer mehr verschwand, und jetzt einer sehr

Even though it is unlikely that the hair tone of the practitioners changed through rune-gymnastics, I do believe that this is what they truly perceived. Furthermore, emotional and bodily self-perception does frame behavior and corporeality – although not in the intentionally-linear way as the practitioners and Marby thought.

Although predicaments of rune-gymnastics were often reported to have been met, they mostly were not-quite. Marby's responses to his disciples constantly struggle to integrate the experiences in a narrative of racialization – at times with contradictory results. Since experiencing the 'proper' results of rune-gymnastics meant being that racialized subject they addressed, lacking the anticipated effects was cause of anxiety. Thus, where the expected racial traits did not materialize, a repeatedly feared cause was expected in a racially mixed ancestry was frequently feared.<sup>186</sup> Marby's response, however, drew on anthropological studies to sustain his clientele, stating that even the few racially pure Germans, could have been harmed by wrong thought, character traits, emotional disposition, or the habits of their ancestors. Rune-gymnastics was not meant for those who considered themselves as bourgeois, white Germans, but at those 'Aryans' haunted by fears of their own impurity, class and gender positions. The lack of clarity about racial affiliation thus constituted the desire for improvement and self-care – where it could be afforded. More often, it could not. Reports state a lack of time and resources to fully engage to the extent the manuals demanded, to regularly submit a report or to even afford Marby's journal. Choosing a life in a settlement was at times a (physically highly demanding) way to incorporate race-appropriate practices into the everyday.

## Materializing the Aryan

The Voelkisch work on affect and the body reveals, that the education of emotions cannot be separated from bodily practices and materiality itself. Emotions are enhanced by bodily practices and their effects are simultaneously discursive, affective, and corporeal. Aryanism was more than an ideology - it was a learned identity that was educated to be seen, felt, and experienced in the everyday. Thus, emotions are relations that

gesunden Hautfarbe Platz gemacht hat. Worüber ich mich sehr herzlich freue. Wie ich Ihnen neulich schon schrieb, habe ich jetzt wieder festgestellt, dass tatsächlich das blonde Haar meiner Frau heller geworden ist ohne dass irgendein Bleichmittel angewendet wurde." (Neudeutsche Zeitung Nr. 63, 15. Februar 1934, p. 3).

186 Der Runenforscher Nr. 10, p.3.

create the very sociality of those who engage in them – as well as its borders. ‘Sharing emotions’ is not a distribution and communication of pre-existing subjective feeling, but the creation of the very affectual relations framing collective and individual subjectivity – constitutively tied to and placed in discourses of race.

Rune-gymnastics can be analyzed historically as a practice that constituted German whiteness-as-lived. In this sense, Charles Mills designates a ‘social ontology of race’, distinguishing its historical materiality from a classical biological materiality of race as well as from a poststructuralist constructivism.<sup>187</sup> He argues that we need to look at the constitution not only of racism, but of a historically powerful — and therein real — category of race. Mills sees race as a ‘material’ structure of modernity which morally stigmatizes those belonging to non-white races. They are categorized as ‘lesser bodies’ in a hierarchical order of humanness — with their “membership in this inferior order marked on their flesh. [...] Race is constructed, yes, but this construction takes place through the body and so is experienced in the body”<sup>188</sup>. This is also true for whiteness. Through ‘race-appropriate practices’ in the Voelkisch movement, not only racism was produced through exclusion and corporeal demarcation. Rather, the superiority of whiteness was inhabited and marked on the bodies of the practitioners and believers. Whiteness is indeed constituted and reproduced as race – depending on context, place and time it is specific and always in the making. Constituted and constantly re-instated exactly because it’s lacking clarity and universality, whiteness designates a set of place-specific relations rather than a property or a concept. The making of Aryan identity emerged within those relations, but also was realized through its divergence from an ideal category of ‘White’ – as it is the case with whiteness-as-lived. Thus, ‘White’ does not designate skin-color, but a way to position oneself in the world that is subject to change. The racial affiliation of one actor can shift from ‘White’ to ‘Brown’ and ‘Black’ depending on her being located in different socio-political systems of race in place or time.<sup>189</sup>

The education of sentiment and white interiority as interpellation in feeling and habitus was key in the process of racial self-constitution. Internalized as the very perceptions of subjecthood and affective

187 Mills, Charles (2011): *Body Politic, Bodies Impolitic*, in: *Social Research* 78.2, pp. 583-606, here p. 585.

188 *Ibid.*, p. 591.

189 Mills, Charles (2010): [Ukingshalifax] (23.09.2010): *Does Race exist?* [YouTube-Video], Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=epAv6Q6da\\_o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=epAv6Q6da_o) .



delimitation from others, they translated colonial anxieties into the very emotional and corporeal substance of the German self.<sup>190</sup>

Colonialism makes the world 'white', which is of course a world 'ready' for certain kinds of bodies, as a world that puts certain objects within their reach. Bodies remember such histories, even when we forget them. Such histories, we might say, surface on the body, or even shape how bodies surface (see Ahmed, 2004a). Race then does become a social as well as bodily given, or what we receive from others as an inheritance of this history.<sup>191</sup>

Such memories are, of course, placed in the specific social makeup of Germany, weaving colonial "carnal knowledge"<sup>192</sup> into situated habits, local practices. and histories.

Let us return for a moment to the first citation of this text: When Hans Blüher writes in 1922, that "antisemitism [...] will become an organic common sense of the German."<sup>193</sup>, he designates the relation between race and racism as intertwined and as a material site of subject formation. "Just as the movements we learn through the body become unconscious and sink down into our spinal cord, so that we cannot but move in a certain way, so the German collective body today cannot but react anti-Semitic."<sup>194</sup> The anti-Semitic affect is understood as a constitutive element of Blüher's perception of Germanness, which he experienced as materialized, bodily and unconscious effects. Thus, what 'sank down' into the 'spinal cord' was not just antisemitism, but a particular habit of German whiteness, which was constituted through the anti-Semitic and racist affect.

In *Revealing Whiteness. The Unconscious Habits of Racial Privilege*, Shannon Sullivan analyzes whiteness in its phenomenological and ontological functioning:

The ontological roots that white privilege puts down are bodily as well as psychical, or rather, engage a person's physicality and mentality in their co-constitution. White privilege is not just 'in the head'. It also is 'in' the nose that smells, the back, neck, and other muscles that imperceptibly tighten with anxiety, and the eyes that see

190 Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*; *Ibid.*, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*.

191 Ahmed, *A Phenomenology of Whiteness*, p. 153f.

192 Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*.

193 "Antisemitismus wird einmal als Erkenntnis aufleuchten und dann wieder verschwinden, dafür aber organische Selbstverständlichkeit des deutschen Menschen werden" Blüher: *Secessio judaica*, p. 49.

194 My translation. Original: "So wie in den Körpern gelernte Bewegungen unbewußt werden und ins Rückenmark versinken, so daß man nicht mehr anders kann, als sich so bewegen, so kann der deutsche Volkskörper heute nicht mehr anders, als antisemitisch reagieren." (*ibid.*).

some but not all physical differences as significant. A person's psychological disposition toward the world can be found throughout her body, in her physical comportment, sensations, reactions, pleasures, and pains, just as her bodily (dis)functionings help constitute her mental tendencies and proclivities.<sup>195</sup>

Equivalently, drawing on Frantz Fanon, the experience of racism is inscribed in the material bodies of individual and collective — bodily as well as psychically.<sup>196</sup> Fanon's reference point is the body as lived — not the body as reflected upon: "The body as lived is the unthought means by which I am an active agent in the world."<sup>197</sup> According to George Yancy, "[t]he existentially lived and socially embodied impact of 'race' is often left either unexplored or under-theorized."<sup>198</sup> And it is these tacit levels of race and racism that often go unnoticed and are difficult to detect. All the more so, if race — let alone the embodied impact of race — is not being addressed in the German speaking context. By eliminating the concept of 'race' from our analytic vocabulary and supplementing it with concepts such as 'skin color', 'ethnicity' or 'culture',<sup>199</sup> the implicit racialized archive of the latter can no longer be addressed. Proposing a "German Exceptionalism"<sup>200</sup> and assuming an exceptionally vile legacy of German Racism in National Socialism, leaves the category of race unnamed, and its multiple sites in and genealogies beyond the German national framework insufficiently explored.

Histories do stick, as Sara Ahmed tells us,<sup>201</sup> to bodies, but also to practices, perceptions and emotionality — for instance to the way how people are perceived as being intentional or appropriate in their emotionality or rather 'just being' an 'emotional sort of person'.<sup>202</sup> As Shiloh Whitney points out, especially women and people of Color are often denied the recognition of a reference and intention in their affective states. And it is these multiple affective and bodily levels of race and racism, I would argue, whose histories persist all the more into the

195 Sullivan, Shannon (2006): *Revealing Whiteness. The Unconscious Habits of Racial Privilege*, Indianapolis, p. 188.

196 Fanon, Frantz (2013): *Schwarze Haut, weiße Masken*, Wien, p. 111.

197 Sullivan, Shannon (2004): *Ethical Slippages, Shattered Horizons, and the Zebra Striping of the Unconscious: Fanon on Social, Bodily, and Psychical Space*, in: *Philosophy & Geography* 7.1, pp. 9-24, here p. 13.

198 Yancy, George (2008): *Elevators, Social Spaces and Racism*, in: *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 34.8, p. 843–876, here 843.

199 Barskanmaz, Cengiz (2011): *Rasse - Unwort des Antidiskriminierungsrechts?*, in: *Kritische Justiz* 3/2011, pp. 382-389, here pp. 386, 388.

200 *Ibid.*, p. 387; Barskanmaz, Cengiz (2008): *Rassismus, Postkolonialismus und Recht: zu einer deutschen Critical Race Theory?*, in: *Kritische Justiz* 3/2008, p. 296-302.

201 Ahmed, *Affective Economies*, p. 127.

202 Whitney, Fanon.

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present day and therefore need historical attention to open the possibility of critique.

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